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# *The* PHILOSOPHY *of the* ABBÉ BAUTAIN

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TO MY WIFE

1333

# PREFACE

PROTESTANT students of the history of Catholic Thought are accustomed to break off at the Council of Trent, with the remark that, apart from the decrees of the Vatican Council, there is nothing more of importance to relate. This may be true with respect to the official pronouncements of the Church; but the implied assumption, that Catholics have done no significant thinking in the last few centuries, is certainly false. Particularly misleading is the common impression that, in matters of philosophy and apologetics, Catholics have done nothing more than to repeat the arguments and the very words of the great mediaeval Scholastics, without ever attempting to adapt them to the vicissitudes of the modern world.

The last few centuries, on the contrary, have witnessed some most interesting attempts on the part of Catholic thinkers to achieve a new philosophical synthesis, based in part but not wholly upon the mediaeval synthesis, in which modern intellectual tendencies shall be as fully reckoned with as were the speculations of the Moslem and Jewish philosophers in the system of St. Thomas Aquinas. The history of the influence of Descartes upon Catholic thought has never been thoroughly explored; at least in France, the Cartesian tendency long outstripped the Thomistic, and its effects have never wholly disappeared. The philosophy of the eighteenth century had its reaction, both positive and negative, upon the Catholic thinkers of the early nineteenth century. A few, like Professor Hermes of Bonn, boldly accepted the standards of the Enlightenment, and defended Catholicism on grounds of rationality; others, like de Bonald and de Maistre, appealed from reason to tradition and authority, thus, all unintentionally, stirring up a perfect hornets' nest of philosophical problems, which it took more than a generation to settle. But the most interesting epoch of all is the second quarter of the nineteenth century. At this time, under the combined influence of political Liberalism and philosophical Idealism, Catholic thought began to show signs of vigor and fecundity that seemed to give promise of another burst

of creative and constructive thinking like that which illumined the period from Anselm to Aquinas—a promise that grew brighter and brighter in the years from 1830 to 1848, and whose fulfilment was perhaps prevented only by the great wave of political and theological reaction that set in at the middle of the century.

A few of the leaders of this Catholic Renaissance are well known to us: J. A. Moehler and his colleagues at Tübingen; Görres, Baader, and the whole illustrious circle at Munich; Lamennais and Lacordaire in France; John Henry Newman—more timid and reactionary than any of the Continental leaders—in England. But the sudden and abortive ending of the movement buried many interesting figures in undeserved oblivion, of whom perhaps the most romantic and fascinating, as it seems to me, is Louis Bautain, "the philosopher of Strasbourg." In him, the most diverse intellectual currents of the century, coming from both sides of the Rhine, met and mingled to form a system of Christian philosophy which in scope and plan, if not, alas, in execution, deserves to be compared with the great systems of the Alexandrian fathers and of the Scholastics. The critical philosophy of Kant and the speculative systems of the post-Kantian Idealists; Scotch realism and French traditionalism; the influence of Pascal, Descartes, and Malebranche; classical Platonism modified by the influence of St. Augustine and the German Romanticists; Christian mysticism, and Jewish Cabalism; a first-hand knowledge of biology and genetic psychology—all these elements went into Bautain's melting-pot, where they were refined by a most acute and critical intelligence and fused by the ardor of a passionately religious spirit. Known to Catholics as the protagonist of an obscure heresy called *fideism*, of which he was never guilty in the form alleged; known to Protestants, if at all, as a clerical reactionary of the school of de Bonald and de Maistre—never was a philosophical genius more grossly misunderstood by posterity. Yet his ideas, travelling subterraneously through the works of one of his pupils, Father Gratry, have exercised a profound influence upon the subsequent history of Catholic thought in France. It is in the hope of reinstating Bautain in his proper position in the history of religious thought that the following pages are written.

My contention is, in brief, that Bautain represents a most inter-

esting modification of the Platonic strain in Christian thought, under the combined influence of Kant, German Romanticism, and French Traditionalism; that he initiated an anti-intellectualistic, intuitionistic, voluntaristic tendency in French Catholic thought which still persists in the school of the "Philosophy of Action"; that, through this school, he stands in an ancestral relation to French Catholic Modernism (much as Newman does to English Catholic Modernism); that, finally, through this same line of descent, he is to be reckoned among the progenitors of that great anti-intellectualistic movement of recent years which in France is associated with the name of Bergson, but which in Anglo-Saxon countries goes by the name of Pragmatism.

This last point perhaps demands a word of explanation. Positivistic Pragmatists of the Dewey school will doubtless resent the insinuation that a Catholic apologist is to be numbered among their intellectual ancestors. Their ancestors, they will insist, were all good sober English empiricists and utilitarians like Hume and Mill; there is no blot of mysticism or romanticism in their 'scutcheon; if any Frenchman has influenced them, it is Auguste Comte. Quite so; but let it be remembered that the Pragmatist movement, in its inception, was by no means the cautious, severely scientific tendency into which it has now evolved—or degenerated. It was a bold, headstrong revolt against all rationalism, intellectualism, and scholastic logic-chopping; and, in that revolt, scientific empiricism and religious mysticism fought side by side. The left-wing Pragmatism of Peirce and Dewey was indeed the legitimate offspring of nineteenth-century empiricism, utilitarianism, and positivism; but the right-wing Pragmatism of James, Schiller, and other religious thinkers owed its origin to a more complex union of tendencies. M. Berthelot has clearly showed, in his brilliant analysis of the antecedents of Pragmatism (*Un Romantisme Utilitaire*), that if we are to understand the relation of Pragmatism to preceding philosophies we must study the vitalistic and voluntaristic tendencies of German idealism, and not confine our attention to the Anglo-Saxon side of the family tree. If, then, it is permissible to cite such men as Kant, Schopenhauer, Lotze, Maine de Biran, Ravaisson and Renouvier when making a list of the forerunners of Pragmatism, it is equally permissible to cite the name of Bautain. One

thing is certain, at any rate: that William James, in the Preface to his lectures on "Pragmatism," referred to Blondel and Le Roy, the spiritual successors of Bautain, in terms which indicated that he regarded them as comrades and companions-at-arms in the Pragmatist crusade.

My thanks are due to M. le Professeur Gilson of the Sorbonne, who first called my attention to Bautain; to M. le Supérieur Sabatier of the College of Juilly, and M. l'Abbé Laberthonnière, who gave me a delightful day at the old college, and much help in tracing Bautain's influence; above all, to M. l'Abbé Eugène Baudin, professor of philosophy in the Faculty of Catholic Theology at Strasbourg University, who put at my disposal his large collection of Bautainiana, and who has been giving me valuable advice and assistance ever since—going so far as to annotate copies of important Bautain manuscripts for my benefit. I am indebted to Professors W. T. Bush of Columbia and R. B. Perry of Harvard for reading and criticizing my manuscript, to my friend Professor Ross Collins of Syracuse for helping me with the proof-reading, and to Professor Arthur H. Nason and Miss Hannah E. Steen of the New York University Press for their efficient editorial oversight. Throughout the progress of my research, I should have fared ill without the constant and patient collaboration of my wife.

W. M. H.

Cape Porpoise, Maine.
August 19, 1926.

# CONTENTS


PAGE

PREFACE ..... vii

INTRODUCTION ..... 3

I. Catholic Thought in France under the Napoleonic Régime: the Rise of Traditionalism ..... 3

Revival of Catholicism in France at beginning of nineteenth century. Frayssinous, only clerical philosopher worthy of note during Napoleonic period. Châteaubriand's *Génie du Christianisme* and its significance. The Traditionalism of de Bonald and de Maistre.

II. Catholic Thought in France under the Restoration: the Liberalizing of Traditionalism ..... 16

Lamennais's *Essai sur l'indifférence en matière de religion.* Democratic and liberal tendencies implicit in the *Essai.* Ballanche.

III. The Religious and Philosophical Situation in France in 1833: the Decline of Traditionalism and the Rise of Liberal Catholicism ..... 25

The Traditionalist apologetic inopportune after the Revolution of 1830. Lamennais's change of front. The Political liberalism of *l'Avenir* and *l'Ère Nouvelle.* Prevailing philosophical tendencies; triumph of Cousin's Eclecticism over the Sensualism of Condillac and the Scotch realism of Royer-Collard. Need of a new Catholic apologetic to meet the new philosophical situation. The Abbé Bautain and his attack upon the old apologetics.

IV. Main Currents in German Catholic Thought, 1800-1833 36

Parallels and contrasts between the Catholic revival in France and the Catholic revival in Germany. Romanticism and Catholicism. Three main tendencies in German Catholic Thought at this period. Hermes and the school of Bonn. Günther and the school of Vienna. Schelling, Baader, and the school of Munich. The Tübingen school. The school of Mayence and its relation to the school of Strasbourg.

CHAPTER I. Louis Bautain: The Odyssey of an Ardent Soul . . . 56

Early life. Relations with Cousin, Jouffroy, and Damiron at the *École Normale.* Thesis, *De idealismo et phaenomenismo.* Becomes teacher of philosophy at Strasbourg; Fichte's influence upon him predominant at this period. Nervous breakdown; Mlle. Humann rescues him from suicide and converts him to Catholicism. Course in Metaphysics, 1821-22, marks conversion. Founding of the "Strasbourg School"; period of greatest influence. Controversy with the Bishop of Strasbourg. *Philosophie du Christianisme.* Recantation. Break-up of the Strasbourg School. Publication of Bautain's philosophical works; their complete failure to attract attention. *Choses de l'autre monde.*

CHAPTER II. Bautain as a Panvitalist ..... 102

Bautain as a system-builder. His central idea, life as conditional spontaneity. Formulated most exactly in the *Propositions générales sur la vie.* Bautain's panvitalism. Four other ideas of great im-

PAGE

portance in his system: (1) the idea of Nature; (2) the idea of Being, or God; (3) the idea of Man; (4) the idea of *Rapport*. Ethical and political implications of the idea of life as *rapport*, or limited spontaneity. Religious implications. Educational implications.

CHAPTER III. Bautain as a Voluntarist ..... 142

I. Bautain's Critique of the Reason: His Anti-Intellectualism 142

Genetic psychology of the knowing process: priority of will over intellect. Reason and intelligence: Bautain as an intuitionist. Reason and faith: Bautain as a fideist. Reason and revelation: Bautain as a traditionalist. Final upshot of Bautain's critique of the reason.

II. Bautain's Theory of Truth and Certitude: His Semi-Pragmatism ..... 190

The meaning of truth. The psychology of certitude. The criterion of truth: Bautain and William James.

III. The Apologetics of the Heart and the Apologetics of the Intelligence ..... 209

The apologetics of the heart illustrated in the *Philosophie du Christianisme*. Relation to the apologetics of the intelligence. Theology, philosophy, and science. The method of analogy. Bautain and the old apologetics: rejection of the cosmological and teleological arguments, and the argument from miracle. Why did the Church reject the new apologetics?

CHAPTER IV. Bautain's Place in the History of Thought ..... 233

I. Bautain and His Contemporaries ..... 234

His critique of eighteenth-century philosophy. Critique of the Scotch school. Critique of German Idealism and French Eclecticism. Critique of Scholasticism. Critique of Traditionalism. Position of Bautain midway between French Traditionalism and German Catholic Romanticism.

II. Bautain as an Eclectic: His Philosophy of the History of Thought ..... 263

Christian Eclecticism. "True and False Philosophy." Classification of the historic philosophies. Final formula for Bautain's philosophy.

III. Bautain's Influence upon the Subsequent History of French Catholic Thought ..... 284

French Catholic Thought in the nineteenth century falls into three main periods; Bautain's philosophy gives us the epitome of all three. Bautain's influence upon the dying Traditionalist movement: Bonnetty and the school of Louvain. Influence upon Maret. Upon Gratry. Ollé-Laprune. The Philosophy of Action. Its Relation to Anglo-American Pragmatism and Catholic Modernism. Bautain's relation to the Modernist movement. The persistence of his influence.

BIBLIOGRAPHY ..... 299

INDEX ..... 315

# THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE ABBÉ BAUTAIN

# INTRODUCTION

## I

### Catholic Thought in France Under the Napoleonic Régime: the Rise of Traditionalism

At the dawn of the nineteenth century, Roman Catholicism seemed to have lost its hold upon the French people. In the eyes of the average citizen of the Republic, the Church stood condemned because of its close association with the Old Régime. Public worship was no longer proscribed, as it had been from 1792 to 1795; but many of the clergy were still in exile or in prison because of their hostility to the new order, and the little bands of the faithful which gathered here and there in private houses and improvised sanctuaries did so under the shadow of public disapproval. In the eyes of the intelligentsia, trained in the school of Diderot, Voltaire, and d'Holbach, historic Christianity, like all "positive" religions, was a vast imposture, devised by clever priests, tending to shackle the intelligence and to put a drag upon all progress. A certain reaction against atheism was visible; the mandate had gone forth that atheism was aristocratic, hence not *comme il faut* for good citizens; but it would be going too far to say that this nascent reaction against atheism was, as yet, a reaction toward Catholicism. One professed a certain frigid Deism, after the manner of Voltaire; one admired the creed of the Savoyard Vicar, in Rousseau's *Émile;* that was all. No defender of the ancient faith of Christendom had yet arisen who could gain even a hearing in philosophical circles.

Hardly had the century begun, however, when the winds of public opinion began to shift, and a revival of Roman Catholicism began—a revival which at first took the shape of a formal restoration, supported chiefly by political reactionaries, for reasons of state, but which finally, in the period between 1830 and 1848, assumed the proportions of a genuine popular movement. For a time, towards the middle of the century, and once again in its closing years, it looked as though, by a process of mutual concessions, a reconcilia-

tion was about to be effected between the ancient religious heritage of France on the one hand, and, on the other hand, the secular humanitarianism, secular science, and secular philosophy which in the eighteenth century had come into open conflict with religion. A liberalized, popularized, and modernized Catholicism seemed about to become the center of a Christianized civilization. The fact that we are to-day in the midst of a similar religious revival—which likewise threatens to become a mere blind reaction, thus failing to achieve that harmonious cultural synthesis which our distraught and disintegrated civilization so badly needs—should lend a peculiar interest to the history of this earlier movement. We shall concern ourselves here primarily with its intellectual aspects; but some account of its social and political aspects will be necessary in order to give the proper perspective.

It was Bonaparte who began the external rehabilitation of Roman Catholicism. Swept into power on the crest of a wave of reaction, conscious that order and stability were what people craved, he saw in the Catholic Church a powerful stabilizing agency, which, if properly conciliated, might become a useful tool in his hands. Not long after his accession as First Consul, he freed the imprisoned priests, on condition that they should not oppose the Constitution; and he opposed no obstacle to the return of the exiled priests. Then, in swift succession, came the Concordat of 1801, making Catholicism the official religion of France, and the amnesty of 1802, which brought back forty thousand emigrant nobles, most of them ardent Catholics. At a stroke, Catholicism was lifted from the depths of humiliation to the heights of eminent respectability.

Much as the Catholics rejoiced at these events, it must be said that the position of the Church under the Consulate and Empire was hardly less humiliating than it had been under the Republic. Then, she had at least preserved the dignity that goes with fortitude under persecution; now, she had bartered her soul in exchange for temporal advantages, and Mephistopheles himself could not have been more tenacious than Napoleon in holding her to the bargain. He appointed the bishops himself; the captive Pope was forced to confirm the appointments; the bishops appointed the priests; and so the whole Church became an organ of the State.

The utterances of the priests were severely censored; a chorus of adoration, fear-inspired, arose from every parish; the Catechism was revised to include a section on love for the Emperor (penalty for sinning against this commandment, eternal damnation);[1] and the Master of Europe could smile with satisfaction as he observed the exemplary loyalty of his clergy.

Under these circumstances, it was hardly to be expected that any very vigorous or original thinkers should arise among the clergy. *Thought* was precisely what Napoleon aimed to discourage. During the whole Napoleonic period, only one clerical philosopher attracted even passing attention: Mgr. Frayssinous, whose public lectures at St. Sulpice achieved a considerable popularity between the years 1803 and 1809.[2]

> He was able [says Damiron] in the presence of an audience of *gens du monde*, and, especially, young people, to speak in such a way as to get a hearing for the words of a priest and a Catholic: it was no small success in view of the prevailing state of mind. Adopting a Cartesian position full of modifications and concessions, stripping the Scholastic method of its quibbles and its bad form, he made, with a certain energetic common sense and some conversance with contemporary science, some fairly good objections to the sensualist hypothesis. If, later on, the published lectures did not entirely revive the impression they created when delivered, it was because they were no longer *apropos*, and because there is nothing sufficiently original and powerful in their thought, and nothing sufficiently distinguished in their style.[3]

It will be seen that there was nothing very startling about these lectures; but Napoleon, who was suspicious of "ideology" of any brand, twice put a stop to them: the first time because Frayssinous objected to introducing a plea for conscription into a lecture on the existence of God; the second time because he had protested against the seizure of the Pope.[4]

If the clergy were condemned to intellectual sterility under this system of censorship and surveillance, there were at least a few

[1] Foisset, *Vie du R. P. Lacordaire*, I, 17, 472.

[2] These lectures, together with a second series delivered during the Restoration, were published in 1825, under the title of *Défense du Christianisme* (Eng. trans., London, 1836).

[3] Damiron, *Essai sur l'histoire de la philosophie en France au XIXme siècle*, Brussels, 1835, 62.

[4] Foisset, *op. cit.*, I, 11, 468-471.

laymen capable of original thinking; and some of them contributed mightily to the Catholic revival. Chief among them were three noblemen: Count Joseph de Maistre, the Viscount de Bonald, and François-René de Châteaubriand. I mention de Maistre and de Bonald first, because their earliest apologetical writings antedate Châteaubriand's; but neither of them attracted public attention till much later.[5] Châteaubriand's *Génie du Christianisme*, published in 1802, was really the first effective shot fired by the Catholic party.

The *Génie du Christianisme* is of course not a technical philosophical work; none the less, it is a landmark in the history of Catholic thought. It is the first systematic attempt to present an apology for religion on the ground of what Rousseau, in a famous remark, called its "utility." The *truth* of Christianity is indeed defended, with arguments which, as Masson points out, are largely borrowed from the Savoyard Vicar's profession of faith in Rousseau's *Émile;*[6] but it is upon the *value* of Christianity that Châteaubriand chiefly insists: its aesthetic value, as exemplified in the stately ceremonial of the Mass, the majestic architecture of the Gothic cathedrals, and Dante's *Divine Comedy;* its moral value, as exemplified in the lives of martyrs and missionaries; its social value, as exemplified in the manifold charitable institutions which the Church has fostered. "Even though one should deny the supernatural proofs of Christianity," says Châteaubriand at the very end of his book, "there would still remain, in the sublimity of its ethics, in the immensity of its benefits, in the beauty of its ceremonial, the sufficient means of proving that it is the divinest and purest form of worship that ever men have practiced." It is significant that this phrase comes between a quotation from Rousseau and one from Pascal. They, to be sure, are the classic exponents of the "argument from the heart"; but Châteaubriand worked out the argument with such a wealth of detail, and made such an impression on the general public, that he set the style for popular apologetics for almost a century. If the reading of the *Émile* was for many a

[5] Weill *(Histoire du Catholicisme libéral en France,* 6) points out that their influence was at its height during and even after the period of the Restoration. Under the Empire, both lived in comparative obscurity.

[6] See Masson, *Rousseau et la Restauration Religieuse.*

French youth—including Châteaubriand himself—a first step back toward religion, the reading of the *Génie du Christianisme* was a second and much longer step, that led to the very doors of the Church.[7]

Traditionalism, as the philosophy of de Maistre and de Bonald came to be called, represents a very different type of apologetics. It does not woo the soul; it storms and threatens. From one point of view, it does not properly belong to the Napoleonic period, for, as has been said, it was practically without influence in France until the Restoration; but it was formulated at this period, and it bears the marks of it: it is essentially an *émigré* philosophy, born of bitter hostility to the French Revolution and to the philosophy which paved the way for it.

"Is it possible," wrote de Maistre to de Bonald after the publication of de Bonald's *Recherches philosophiques*, "that Nature could have played such a trick as to stretch two strings as perfectly in tune as your mind and mine? . . . I have thought nothing you have not written; I have written nothing you have not thought." It is most remarkable that these two men, whose careers kept them widely separated throughout their lives, should have had so much in common. Born in the same year (1754), they both remained obscure personages in remote provincial towns until the Revolution wrecked their fortunes, overturned all the institutions they held dear, and drove them into exile. Then, simultaneously, in 1796,[8] they broke into print with books so similar in point of view that they gave the effect of a concerted broadside: de Bonald with his *Théorie du pouvoir politique et religieux dans la société*, published in Constance; de Maistre with his *Considérations sur la France*, published in Neufchâtel. Both books were proscribed by the Directory, and naturally were not widely influential except among *émigrés*. De Bonald later found favor with Napoleon and returned to France; de Maistre spent most of his life an exile from his native Savoy, as envoy of the King of Sardinia at the Russian court; but in spite of the fact that they never collaborated with one another, their works continued to show a remarkable

[7] One of Bautain's Jewish converts had precisely this experience. For him, contact with Bautain and the "Strasbourg Philosophy" led to the third and decisive step of actual submission to the Church.

[8] It is true that de Maistre had already published some unimportant pamphlets.

degree of unanimity, which naturally augmented as time went on.

De Bonald and de Maistre are at one in their diagnosis of the disease which caused the break-down of civilization in France in 1791: it was all the result of a false philosophy, which, carrying out the principle of the Protestant Reformation, placed its trust in the reason and conscience of the human individual, fancying it could improve upon nature; it substituted a rational, artificially concocted constitution for a divinely ordained social order that had stood the test of the centuries; and it substituted its own wild speculations about the universe for the traditional dogmas of the Catholic Church, the trustee of all Truth. The philosophies of the eighteenth century talked much about Nature, and natural law, and natural religion; but behold how Nature revenges herself upon them, exposing the error of their most unnatural doctrines by their odious consequences! They appealed to reason: let it be proved by reason, then, that authority and faith, not reason, are the only safe guides; that society is not the result of a contract between individuals, but of a primeval fiat of God; that human nature is bad, not good, and the human conscience untrustworthy—hence democracy is doomed to failure and the hope of universal peace and endless progress is a chimera.

The doctrine which de Bonald and de Maistre both single out as the chief object of their attack is Rousseau's theory that civilized society arose artificially, by contract, out of an original individualistic "state of nature," when all men were free, equal, and virtuous like the happy savages of North America.[9] They maintain, on the contrary, that the social state is man's natural state, and that the individual by himself is helpless and morally corrupt.

Rousseau failed to distinguish, says de Bonald, between man's *native* state, which is one of infantile weakness, and his *natural* state, which is a state of full development only to be reached in society. The savage state may be man's native state, but it is not his natural state. De Bonald is fond of citing certain cases of children abandoned in the forest and left to grow up wild, to prove that the individual owes all to society. "*Man exists only*

[9] Rousseau may not have meant just this, but this is how he was understood by both friends and foes.

*for society, and society forms him only for herself.*"[10] "*Society is the true and even the sole nature of man.*"[11] As for the contract theory, history and logic are both against it. As far back as we may look, we shall always find man living in society and subject to environment; and a contract, by very definition, presupposes the existence of a regulative power to whose authority the parties may appeal in case of violation. Hence *power*, not contract, is the "principle constitutive of society."[12] In the family, the simplest society we know, not liberty and equality, but inequality and subjection to authority, are the rule. Without inequality and subjection, no society.

De Maistre seconds de Bonald most vigorously.

> Man [he says] can modify everything within the sphere of his activity, but he creates nothing; such is his law, in the physical as in the moral realm. Man can of course plant a seedling, grow a tree, and perfect it by grafting and pruning in a hundred ways; but he has never fancied that he had the power of making a tree. How has he come to imagine that he had that of making a constitution? [13]

In other words, stable constitutions are always the product of *growth;* they do not originate in any such artificial processes as Rousseau's contract or the deliberations of the Constituent Assembly. Artificially formulated constitutions have now proved themselves essentially unstable; "as they were without roots in the country and were only *placed* upon the soil instead of being *planted* there, they were carried away by the slightest breath of air."[14] A side reference is clearly intended to Montesquieu, whom both our authors berate for trying to transport English institutions to France.

It was not only established institutions that eighteenth-century philosophy presumed to question: it was established religious dogmas as well. De Bonald and de Maistre are convinced that the calamities of the French Revolution sprang quite as much from skepticism in religion and ethics as from radicalism in politics; and they attack the human reason on both counts, declaring that it is just as incompetent to discover the truth about the Universe as it is incom-

[10] De Bonald, *Théorie du Pouvoir*, Préface, 3.

[11] *Recherches philosophiques*, chap. xi. Delbos, *Philosophie Française*, 288.

[12] *Principe constitutif de la société*, chap. vi.

[13] *Considérations sur la France*, chap. vi.

[14] *Ibid.*

petent to frame a scheme of government. Over against human reason they set divine revelation, embodied in authoritative tradition, which they trace back to a primitive Golden Age when man learned from the lips of God those salutary principles which are the basis of the moral and social order. They arrive at this common result by two somewhat different lines of reasoning.

De Bonald starts by accepting the empiricist theory of knowledge, and drawing an unexpected conclusion therefrom. According to the Lockian theory, all our ideas are the product either of our own sense-perception or of instruction. The moral and religious ideas which some have tried to defend by calling them innate, have all been taught us; hence they are not sacrosanct at all, and may be freely criticized. De Bonald agrees that environment and education account for all our ideas, and that our moral and religious ideas, as well as all our general ideas, are of social origin and not the product of observation; but he draws the conclusion that they *are* therefore sacrosanct. The empiricists based their liberal conclusion on the observation that moral and religious ideas vary from place to place, and, hence, must be of human invention; de Bonald bases his conservative conclusion on the observation that a certain unity underlies all this diversity, suggesting the theory of a primitive uniform tradition afterwards corrupted.

He establishes this theory of a primitive revelation with the aid of his famous theory of language. Comparative philology was just at this time bringing to light the hitherto unnoticed likenesses between the different Aryan tongues, due in fact to their common origin. The conclusion was irresistible: all mankind had once spoken a single language, the vehicle of a common stream of tradition. If language (that is, education) is the sole source of our moral and religious ideas, this original language is the fountain-head of all truth—for to de Bonald, unity and invariability are signs of truth, and diversification is always corruption. The problem of finding the truth to-day is simply the problem where the original line of tradition is preserved pure and unaltered. The answer is, of course, in the Jewish-Christian tradition of which the Church is the custodian.

But why credit our remote ancestors with omniscience? If the human race all springs from a single stock, it goes without saying

that there was a common language and common tradition at first; but why may that language and the ideas it conveyed not have been of purely human invention, and hence no vehicle of infallible truth at all? That language was a human invention like printing or writing was indeed the view of most eighteenth-century philosophers. Against this view, de Bonald levels his bitterest sarcasms. As if man could ever have emerged from a state of speechlessness by his own efforts! As if savages could ever have invented language, when the most learned grammarians cannot fully comprehend all the cunning mechanism of it, or exhaust the wealth of meaning embodied in our commonest and most ancient words! For, mark you, says de Bonald, the earliest languages of which we have any knowledge are just as complete as the latest, in their complex adaptation to all the needs of thought; and the most ancient languages contain the greatest store of hidden wisdom. Everything points to the theory that the original language, which contained the sum of all wisdom, was taught to the first man by his Creator.

Psychological considerations lead to the same conclusion with even more rigorous certainty. It is a common fallacy that thought without language is possible. So it is, so far as thought based upon sense-images is concerned. But, as Rousseau said, "When the imagination stops, the mind proceeds only with the aid of discourse"; which implies that thought about moral and religious verities, and all things lying above the plane of the senses, is possible only when our fellows have first communicated to us the materials for such thought by means of language. Speech is to the faculty of learning such verities, what light is to the eye: without it we should be incapable of thinking such thoughts, as without light we should be blind. "*L'on pense sa parole avant de parler sa pensée.*" Hence we may see the force in Rousseau's famous remark that "speech appears to have been very necessary to establish the use of speech"; for if thought is in general impossible without the use of words, the supposed inventors of language could never have *thought* of the idea unless they already possessed language. Man acquires, and originally acquired, the faculties of speaking and thinking only by being spoken to—because "*on lui avait parlé.*" "Thanks be to God for the indefinite pronoun *on!*" de Maistre once interjected at this stage in the argument; for the climax is now at hand:

*Who* was it who created speech and thought in primitive man by first speaking to him? Why, God, of course; there was no one else to do it. Q. E. D.

It is a curious fact that de Maistre, who seeks to support the same theory of a primitive revelation and a primitive tongue, starts out from precisely the *opposite* premises. Instead of accepting the empiricist epistemology of Locke and Condillac, he attacks it most bitterly as the source and foundation of the political and philosophical liberalism of the eighteenth century—which indeed it was. Locke is his *bête noire;* with the clairvoyance of hate, he perceives what Santayana is fond of pointing out: that Locke's psychology was a "malicious psychology," designed less to serve the cause of pure science than to serve the cause of free speech and free criticism. If man's moral and political notions have been learned, they may be unlearned; and if man created them, he may re-create them. In opposition to Locke, de Maistre takes up the cudgels in defense of the doctrine of innate ideas. His defense is very ingenious and profound, and perhaps keeps much closer to the facts of life than the somewhat ponderous and artificial theory of Kant, which it much resembles.

He points out how helpless the Lockian epistemology is to deal with the phenomenon of *instinct,* and into what absurdities it falls when it tries to handle it. Locke, he relates, was once asked by Coste, the French translator of the *Essay,* how he would answer the objection that if a chicken flees from a hawk without ever having met one before, many human actions may also be accounted for by innate tendencies antecedent to all experience. At this Locke got angry, and replied brusquely, "I did not write my book to explain the actions of beasts." "*Jupiter, tu te fâches, tu as donc tort!*" exults de Maistre. In truth, Locke had reason to be vexed at the question. Had he answered consistently with his theory, he would have had to give some such absurd response as Condillac actually *did* give:

> The beast will flee because he has seen others devoured. . . . With regard to animals which have not seen their fellows devoured, one may with good reason believe that their mothers must from the first have urged them to flee.[15]

[15] *Essai sur l'origine des connaissances humaines,* sec. II, chap. IV.

Nothing can be clearer, on the contrary, says de Maistre, than that the factor of instinct is always to be reckoned with, side by side with the factor of experience (if experience be defined as the combined influence of environment and education), and that the total knowledge which the beast or the man gets as he passes through life varies even more with the innate instinct factor than with the experience factor. Take as a test case, he suggests, a situation where a man and a beast have an experience together: let us say, a man and his dog witnessing a public execution:

> When the executioner lifts his arm [says de Maistre] the animal, if he is near, may jump aside for fear the blow is intended for him; if he sees blood, he may quiver, but no more than at the butcher's. There his knowledge stops, and all the efforts of his intelligent instructors, employed incessantly for centuries and centuries would never carry him beyond that; the ideas of morality, sovereignty, crime, justice, public authority, etc., which are attached to this sad spectacle, are non-existent for him. All the signs of these ideas surround him, touch him, press upon him, so to speak; but in vain, for no sign can exist where the idea does not preëxist. . . . Who will dare say to you that a volcano, a waterspout, an earth quake, etc., are not for me precisely what the execution is for my dog? I understand about these phenomena what I am designed *(dois)* to understand; that is, all that is in relation with my innate ideas which constitute my status as a man. The rest is a closed book.[16]

Having established the all-important rôle of innate instinct in the knowing process, de Maistre proceeds to assert the superiority of instinctive knowledge or "intuition" to artificial knowledge or science, arrived at by a process of discursive reasoning. Even in the realm of science, he points out, discoveries are not made by any such cautious, ponderous process of exhaustive induction as Francis Bacon describes; they are the result of sudden flashes of insight. Not Bacon, but men like Kepler and Galileo are the real founders of modern science. It is absurd of Bacon to discourage conjecture: "As if man were not condemned to conjecture unceasingly! as if one could take a step in the sciences without conjecturing! as if, in fine, the art of conjecturing were not the most distinctive characteristic of the man of genius in every field!"[17] Especially in the realm of morals and religion is this the case;

[16] *Soirées de St.-Pétersbourg*, 1842 edition, Vol. I, 5th Conversation, 287, 288.

[17] *Philosophie de Bacon*, chap.I, 34-35.

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there, the instincts of the race, embodied in tradition and custom, are far more worthy of trust than the reasonings of philosophers—as the French Revolution has proved.

But if instinct and intuition are sources of truth, why should not the individual be permitted to criticize tradition? If the rationalistic philosopher is to be muzzled, should not the prophet and the genius be left free? and may we not expect new light from them in the sphere of religion and morals, as well as in science? Here is a real inconsequence in de Maistre's thinking, which springs from his effort to effect a synthesis between two inconsistent philosophies, traditionalism and mysticism. It has frequently been pointed out that, so far as his doctrine of intuition is concerned, de Maistre is heavily indebted to Saint-Martin, the eighteenth-century theosophist and *illuminé*. Now Saint-Martin believed in the immediate apprehension of truth in the religious sphere, through mystic illumination, which made authoritative tradition and all other second-hand knowledge unnecessary. Here de Maistre parts company with Saint-Martin. Neither mystic insight nor reason, but authority, is to him "the motive of decision which ought to precede all others."[18] Why? Because the age of inspiration was at the beginning of history, before man's sin had corrupted his instincts. To-day, man is a fallen creature, to whom occasional sporadic flashes of insight come, to remind him of his former state of perfect beatific vision, but condemned for the most part to plod along with the aid of discursive reason, taking as the chief guide of life that body of tradition which has come down to him from a happier epoch.

It will be observed that de Maistre's account of the origin of tradition is somewhat different from de Bonald's. The original deposit of truth was not dictated to man by God, and passed on by word of mouth (thus forever remaining in the class of hearsay information); but, on the contrary, it was intuitively apprehended. The Golden Age was an age when man was immediately conscious of God, and perceived all truth at a glance, without the necessity of reasoning about it. De Maistre argues that men's knowledge in the antediluvian period must have been stupendous, in order to draw down upon them such a stupendous punishment as the Flood;

[18] *Soirées*, I, 2nd *Entretien*, 132.

for moral responsibility is directly proportional to knowledge. Again, all the ancients have the tradition of a Golden Age; and archaeology is making us acquainted with the wisdom of the Etruscans and the Egyptians. The Orient seems to have been the theatre of this earliest civilization, and it is thus a significant fact that Orientals have shown so little aptitude for our Western sciences, based as they are so largely upon discursive reasoning. "One would say that they still remember primitive science and the era of intuition."[19]

The theory of language has an important place in de Maistre's argument, as in de Bonald's. He expresses regret that we do not have more nearly complete knowledge of the languages of savages; he believes they would reveal unexpected traces of the primitive unity of tongues. But the savages are not to be described as primitive people; they are rather to be thought of as degenerates. "It is the last degree of degeneration *(abrutissement)* that Rousseau and his kin call *the state of nature*."[20] Hence their languages are *remnants* and not *rudiments* of more developed tongues. Following up the vague traces of unity discoverable in even these degenerate tongues, and setting them alongside the more impressive evidences of an original unity underlying all the languages of the civilized peoples, both ancient and modern, we shall be able to make a collection of truly primitive words—words not only common to all languages, but full of a mysterious wisdom, often *quite foreign to the people who used the word!*

> The farther one goes back [says de Maistre] toward those times of ignorance and barbarism which saw the birth of the languages, the more logic and profundity one will find in the formation of words; and . . . this talent disappears by a contrary gradation as one comes back toward the epochs of civilization and science.[21]

The word-making powers of the men of de Maistre's Golden Age were as instinctive as their other powers; language originated not by a long process of laborious "invention" but by a sudden and spontaneous outburst, under the influence of the divine Word. The *growth* of language is a natural social process, like the growth

[19] *Soirées*, II, 95.
[20] *Ibid.*, 100.
[21] *Ibid.*, 118.

of political constitutions. De Maistre shows a somewhat amusing antipathy for scientific terms and other invented words, parallel to his antipathy for invented constitutions.

On the whole, it must be said that de Maistre's views, as regards the origin of language, traditions, and institutions, and as regards the theory of knowledge, are much more plausible than de Bonald's. The latter felt the influence of the former, and in his *Législation primitive* he at length came out in favor of the existence of innate ideas;[22] but it must be pointed out that he thus seriously weakened Traditionalism as an argument for political absolutism and theocracy, for he was making a concession to the spontaneity of the individual. De Maistre in turn seemed to feel the weakness in his position, and came more and more to combine his form of the argument for a primitive revelation with the Bonaldian form.[23] Thus an ambiguity was introduced into the Traditionalist position; it may mean either the necessity of accepting tradition blindly, or the superiority of intuition over reason. In the former case, it is a powerful argument for political and religious autocracy; but it is a harder position to maintain. In the latter case, it is an easier position to maintain, but it has democratic implications. We shall see some of these implications becoming explicit in Lamennais, Ballanche, and Bautain.

## II

### Catholic Thought in France under the Restoration: The Liberalizing of Traditionalism

The chief works of de Bonald and of de Maistre appeared not during the Empire, but during the early years of the Restoration. It was then that their influence began to be felt; for all Europe was swept by a wave of political and religious reaction, and clutched eagerly at their theories to justify itself. But side by side with these bitterly reactionary writings appeared writings of another temper, coming from a younger and more forward-looking generation, repeating much the same doctrines, but in a more moderate

[22] For de Maistre's acknowledgement of this change in de Bonald's attitude, see *ibid.*, I, 149, note 2.

[23] For a case in point, see *ibid.*, I, 105-106.

and conciliatory tone. The most noteworthy of these younger writers were Lamennais and Ballanche.

Not that the initial impression they created was one of moderation or conciliation! Never was such a bomb-shell hurled by the theocratic party into the camp of the enemy as when the first volume of Lamennais's *Essai sur l'indifférence en matière de religion* appeared in 1818! Coming at a time when the Catholic clergy seemed sunk in intellectual torpor, this vigorous book, written by an obscure Breton priest, created a most startling impression.

> One hundred fourteen years [writes Lacordaire] had passed over the tomb of Bossuet; seventy-six over that of Massillon. For seventy-six years, then, *no Catholic priest in France had obtained renown as a writer or as a great man.* . . . Enthusiasm and gratitude knew no bounds; truth had been waiting so long for a champion! In a single day, M. de la Mennais, unknown yesterday, found himself invested with the mantle *(puissance)* of Bossuet.[24]

Frayssinous, then in the midst of his second series of conferences, perceived that a greater than he was at hand. "He must increase and I must decrease," he is reported to have said. De Bonald and de Maistre sought to ally themselves with Lamennais, and collaborated with him in the *Conservateur*. The fame of the *Essai* spread all over the Continent; a little later, it was recounted that Pope Leo XII had set up just two objects on the wall of his cabinet, opposite the crucifix: the image of the Holy Virgin, and the portrait of Lamennais!

What was the argument which created so much stir? It may be summed up in the striking phrase with which the second chapter opens: "One finds Religion near the cradle of all peoples, as one finds Philosophy near their tomb." The principle of Religion, dependence upon and subjection to a higher power, is at the foundation of every stable social order; the principle of Philosophy, the self-sufficiency of the individual reason, is the very essence of anarchy. Hence, whenever the influence of Religion is weakened by the fatal admission of the principle of free discussion, the seeds of the destruction of society are sown, since the willingness to sub-

[24] *Considérations sur la système de M. de la Mennais*, 35.

mit to authority is sure to diminish and disappear. Once grant this, and you must embrace Ultramontane Catholicism; for, if you believe in the social utility of religion and yet do not believe in its truth, you are sure to destroy its social utility. The people soon detect the hypocrisy of those rulers who attempt to impose a faith they do not sincerely feel. If, therefore, both rulers and people must be sincerely religious if society is not to perish, what then? They can embrace neither natural religion nor Protestantism, for both admit the destructive principle of free discussion. Therefore they must submit themselves to the supreme spiritual authority of the Pope. And, as Lamennais himself later summed up the remainder of the argument,

> Whoever separates himself from the Catholic Church is necessarily either a heretic, a deist, or an atheist. . . . The heretic, the deist, and the atheist, starting from a common principle, the sovereignty of the human reason, suppose that every man, all faith and authority set aside, must find the truth by his unaided reason, or, what is the same thing, with the aid of Scripture interpreted by the unaided reason. . . . This principle necessarily leads the consistent heretic to deism, the deist to atheism, the atheist to absolute scepticism.[25]

The epistemological part of the argument, here hinted at, was not completely worked out in the first volume, which stressed the argument from social utility.

> Europe [says Lacordaire] was waiting for the continuation of the work.—The author had as yet merely established the importance and necessity of faith. . . . What was the authority that must regulate the human reason? . . . After two years of expectation, the second volume of the *Essai* was published. Nothing could depict the surprise it produced. From the heights of the classic defence of the faith, M. de la Mennais had descended to the arid discussions of philosophy. The solution he proposed violently divided men's minds.[26]

A storm of criticism arose both from the freethinkers and from the theologians; but de Bonald wrote Lamennais to "let all those frogs croak," de Maistre advised him not to take the trouble to reply, and a multitude of young priests embraced the new doctrine enthusiastically, as a sort of gospel. It was current talk that only

[25] *Défence de l'Essai*, chap. x. [26] *Loc. cit.*

the opposition of the French Government robbed him of being awarded the red hat.[27]

In this second volume, Lamennais attacks all philosophers, even religious philosophers, who "claim that each man, considered individually and without relation to his fellows, may find certitude in himself."[28] Passing in review all the chief theories of knowledge—empiricism, idealism, and rationalism or dogmatism—he urges that neither the sense-perceptions nor the "internal impressions" nor the reasonings of the individual in his solitude, apart from the confirmatory testimony of his fellows, can lead to certitude. All individualistic theories of knowledge, as a matter of fact, lead to absolute skepticism, as might be expected; for the whole process of abstracting oneself from society and tradition of which Descartes' philosophical self-discipline is the classic example, is essentially absurd and unnatural. Philosophy's whole method of truth-seeking is wrong, thinks Lamennais; and so he passes a sweeping condemnation on all philosophy. "The object of philosophy is the quest of truth, and almost all the errors which are in the world, and especially the most dangerous ones, are born of this vain quest."[29]

But though philosophy logically leads to skepticism, we are not skeptics.

> Nature does not permit it; she forces us to have faith [says Lamennais]. Man is in a state of natural impotence to demonstrate any truth fully, and an equal impotence to refuse to admit certain truths . . . all the truths necessary to our conservation, all the truths whereon the ordinary intercourse of life and the practice of the indispensable arts and crafts are founded. We believe invincibly that there exist bodies endowed with certain properties, that the sun will rise tomorrow, that when we put seed in the ground it will render a harvest. . . . Try to deny the rightfulness of this faith and you prove it by denying it, since to deny it you would have to speak, and consequently believe in speech, believe in its linkage with our thought and the thought of others, believe in your own existence and the existence of other men, etc., etc.[30]

Here, thinks Lamennais, in this irresistible and almost instinctive

[27] Ferraz, *Traditionalisme et Ultramontanisme*, 209-210.
[28] *Essai*, II, 91, 92.
[29] *Défence*, chap. II, opening sentence.
[30] *Essai*, II, 83, 84.

tendency to believe certain things—many of them unprovable—is a source of knowledge far more reliable than either reason or the senses. It is a tendency, be it noted, which does not vary from individual to individual, but is inherent in man as man, and cannot be destroyed without destroying the human intelligence, and life itself. May we not rightly assume that it is rooted in the fact that each creature is equipped, in the very moment of its creation, with the knowledge of certain primal truths, without which it could not exist? "The primal truths it has received constituting its life," says Lamennais, "it is as impossible for it not to admit them or not to believe in them, as not to have been created; and, if it could conquer this vital faith, it would possess the power of self-annihilation."[31]

But how are we to recognize these primal truths which we cannot help believing? how distinguish them from the fantasies of the individual reason? In a word, by the criterion of universality or *common consent.* "Since there is no intellectual life possible without the knowledge of these truths," says Lamennais, "they should be found in all intelligences, and are to be recognized by this characteristic of universality."[32] After all, when you come to think it over, common consent, or social corroboration, is the test we all apply when we are seeking to distinguish between hallucinations and matters of fact. Insanity consists precisely in the rejection of this social test of truth, and the persistent clinging to individual impressions and notions which are not shared by our fellows. When, therefore, you wish to test the truth of a given belief, do not reason about it, or attempt to test it in your own private experience, but consult the testimony of your fellows. If they unanimously agree, then you will have reached the highest possible degree of certainty with regard to that belief. If the individual human reason is untrustworthy, the general, collective, universal human reason is not. What all men irresistibly believe, is certainly true, because divinely implanted in their very natures.

What of the truth of the Christian religion and the authority of the Catholic Church, when tested by this standard of universal acceptance and common consent? Here the doctrine of Lamen-

[31] *Défence,* chap. x. [32] *Ibid.*

nais allies itself with the Traditionalist scheme, but emphasizes certain considerations which had only been hinted at by de Bonald and de Maistre.[33] As his predecessors had argued from the existence of parallel words in all tongues to the existence of a primitive universal tongue, Lamennais argues from the many similarities which can be traced between all religions to the existence of a primitive universal religion, of which all religions are more or less degenerate forms. De Maistre had said, "The ancient traditions are all true; the whole of paganism is only a system of truths which it suffices to set in their place." Lamennais works this out at length, finding parallels to Christianity everywhere.

That there can be but one true religion, and that this religion is indispensable to salvation, is evident *a priori* from the definition of religion: the ensemble of the relations which exist between God and man, between Creator and creature. These relations are necessary, hence there can be but one true conception of them; they are constitutive of our nature, hence any departure from the one true religion means eventual destruction. Breaking of relations with the physical world means physical death; breaking of relations with society, and through society with God, means moral death.

But which is the true religion? As we have shown, it cannot be discerned by the individual reason—which at once eliminates natural religion—but only by the authority of the universal consent of mankind. Where shall we look for it except in the Catholic Church? Surely not in the Protestant sects, which are only branches of the Catholic Church, blasted by the ravages of individual reason. Not in Judaism either; for apart from certain universally accepted principles common to all religion, it is marked by an abundance of special rites and customs which have never had more than a local significance. Not in the ethnic faiths; they are to be regarded as variant and more or less degenerate forms of the one true religion. Lamennais takes great pains to minimize the differences between Catholicism and paganism. Paganism is not a unified system like Catholicism, and hence is somewhat de-

[33] Besides the influence of the two great Traditionalists, there is clearly to be seen in Lamennais the influence of Châteaubriand, and that of the Scotch realism popularized by Royer-Collard.

generate; but it is unjust to call it polytheistic or idolatrous. The worship of lesser "gods" is not inconsistent with the worship of a supreme God—witness the primacy of Zeus—but is merely a corruption of the doctrine of the Mediator. What we call idolatry, says Lamennais, was simply "the worship of good and evil spirits and the worship of men distinguished by striking qualities or venerated for their good deeds; that is, at bottom, the worship of angels and the worship of saints." As for the Oriental religions, there are to be discerned in all of them the same fundamental doctrines. The Brahm of the Hindus, the Tao of the Chinese, the Knef of the Egyptians, all represent a supreme God identical with the Christian God. Belief in immortality, in the moral law, in the Fall, in the Incarnation, in the efficacity of worship and sacrifice, are universally found. The true and universal religion is what, therefore? Not any one religion, but the universal element in all religions, the universal faith of the human species, which is found in a fragmentary form in all places and all times, but has been called Christianity since Christ came in the flesh. The authority of the Catholic Church rests upon the fact that it is the heir of all human tradition, and teaches a completely comprehensive and universal faith. The universal human reason speaks through the Pope.[34] How plausible this contention is, may perhaps be indicated by the recent remark of a Protestant student of comparative religion: that Catholicism has absorbed so many diverse elements in its long development that it has become the epitome of the whole history of religions, from primitive folk-religion up.[35]

The reader may perhaps observe that although this argument is used to support the authority of the Pope and in general that of the Powers that Be, it is susceptible of being given quite a different twist. For, if all authority rests in the last analysis upon that of the universal human reason, the authority of kings and prelates, being only a delegated authority, may be disputed when it chances to come into conflict with "common sense" or "public opinion." Lamennais did not yet draw these consequences from his position; but his enemies perceived them, and he himself was destined to

[34] For this whole doctrine see the *Essai*, Part III, chap. VIII; Part IV, chaps. III and IV.

[35] Heiler, *Wesen des Katholizismus*.

draw them not many years later, when changed political circumstances and the condemnation of Rome brought him into conflict with both kings and prelates as a champion of humanity and democracy. Even in the *Essai*, a certain democratic flavor may be detected in those passages where he contrasts the soundness of the religious instincts of the people with the corruption and skepticism of the ruling classes, and points out that the disintegration of the social order usually proceeds from the top down.[36] And from still another point of view the *Essai* seems to contain the seeds of the dissolution of absolutism: it is admitted that the universal religion, one in its essence, has taken different forms in different times and places. If that is so, may it not be expected to take new forms in the future, and may not the effort to maintain an unyielding conservatism in religion and politics be a mistake? That Traditionalism, a philosophy designed to bolster up theocracy and monarchy, could thus turn inside out and become the charter of liberalism, is a striking proof of its instability and ambiguity as a system. The well-known fact that Auguste Comte was largely indebted to the Traditionalists for some of his most characteristic ideas—among them that of the "Religion of Humanity"—is a token of the same sort.

In the same year (1818), when Lamennais first burst into prominence, there appeared a more modest work which received comparatively little attention, but which is decidedly symptomatic of what we have called the "liberalizing of Traditionalism." It was entitled "An Essay on Social Institutions in their Relations with the New Ideas," and was written by Pierre-Simon Ballanche, an invalid recluse given to the cultivation of literature and philosophy. He had been among those who had hoped much of the French Revolution; and even though his experiences at the siege of Lyons, his native city, had bitterly disillusioned him, he had not ceased to believe in the possibility of progress. De Maistre's *Considérations sur la France* had convinced him of the folly of the attempt to build a new social order over-night; but he still cherished the hope that liberty and equality might be approached by a process of gradual transformation. During the Empire, this

[36] See especially various phrases in chap. 1: "Plus attaché à ses croyances . . . le peuple résiste longtemps à l'influence des classes supérieures," etc.

hope lay dormant; and he sought consolation in the field of literature. Here he produced some minor works, both theoretic and creative, which mark him as one of the pioneers of French Romanticism. A gentle sentimentality, caught from Rousseau and Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, and from certain mystical authors as well, is his prevailing tone in literature and philosophy. The Restoration, with its stable government and liberal charter, realized his ideal, and aroused in him the ambition to attempt a reconciliation of liberty and authority, stability and progress. Accordingly, in the book already referred to, he undertakes to sketch the history of mankind from this liberal-conservative point of view.

Ballanche agrees with de Maistre in his doctrine of a primitive age of intuition, when divine truth was revealed to our first ancestors and embodied in the traditions of the race; but he does not think the passing of the age of intuition and the coming of the age of reason any more to be regretted than the passing of childhood and the coming of manhood. The truth which our ancestors only dimly divined, we may more and more fully come to understand. In the childhood of the race, when tradition was still oral, it was doubtless necessary to keep it severely guarded from the ever-present danger of alteration, in the possession of a priestly caste; but the invention of writing obviated this difficulty, and the invention of printing has so multiplied the facilities for intercourse that the danger of error maintaining itself uncontradicted has become greatly lessened. The fact that the authority of the guardians of tradition has become divided and diminished is therefore not to be deplored; the people as a whole will ultimately become fit to be its guardian. Ballanche does not mean to imply that perfect freedom of discussion is desirable. Certain things like honor, patriotism, family loyalty, the duty of the individual to serve society, and finally the essential doctrines of religion, are not to be discussed as freely as more secular themes. "Social doctrines," he says, "can never be exposed in their complete nakedness. The statue of Isis was covered with a triple veil: the first was raised by the neophytes; the second, by the priests of the sanctuary; but the third was sacred for all."[37] Reverence for tradition is right, but tradition itself progresses like the society of which it is the life.

[37] *Op. cit.*, chap. I, 21.

In thus making room in his philosophy for social and intellectual progress, Ballanche was stretching the framework of Traditionalism to the breaking-point. To de Bonald and de Maistre, and to Lamennais in his earlier writings, the very notion of progress is anathema. To attempt to improve the social order is to find fault with the divine ordinances; to attempt to improve upon the wisdom of the ancients and the teachings of the Church is both foolish and impious. When, therefore, we find a Catholic layman like Ballanche maintaining that war and capital punishment are both destined to disappear with the growth of popular intelligence and humanitarian feeling; still more, when we find him maintaining in his later work, the *Palingénésie Sociale*, that the dogmas of religion are themselves subject to the law of progress—the doctrine of eternal punishment, he believes, is destined eventually to be repudiated by the Church—we may reasonably infer from all this that new tendencies are afoot in Catholic circles, which will eventually express themselves in a totally new philosophy.

## III

### The Religious and Philosophical Situation in France in 1833: the Decline of Traditionalism and the Rise of Liberal Catholicism

The Restoration of the Bourbons in 1814 had marked a further stage in the external rehabilitation of Catholicism begun by Napoleon. Under the rule of His Most Christian Majesty Louis XVIII, there had been consummated a solemn union of Throne and Altar, this time on a basis of complete mutuality. The prelates of the Church gave their unqualified support to the policies of the government, defending them against all the attacks of the Opposition parties; the government, in return, used its authority to carry out the will of the Church—enforcing the observance of Sunday, punishing acts of "sacrilege," and suspending university professors who expressed unorthodox opinions. Catholicism thus became almost inextricably associated in the public mind with political Conservatism and Legitimism. The Traditionalists did much to confirm this impression, for their defense of Catholicism

was an integral part of their defense of the whole Old Régime. De Bonald himself was no mere theoretician. As a member of the peerage, he voted for the laws suspending the liberty of the press and punishing seditious utterances with deportation; he repeatedly opposed the teaching even of reading and writing to the common people, on the grounds that the extension of education would endanger social stability. Is it any wonder that the resentment of the people was kindled against the Church as well as against the State, and that the Revolution of 1830 overturned the Altar with the Throne?[38] Is it any wonder that Traditionalism as a method of defending the Catholic Church became increasingly out of date after 1830?

For three years after the revolution, says Foisset,[39] no priest durst appear on the street in clerical garb. The humiliation of Catholicism seemed as complete as it had been in 1799. But this time the Church showed an unexpected ability to adjust herself to the new situation. Disappointed in the attempt to impose religion upon the French people by force, she undertook the more Christian enterprise of winning them to it by persuasion; and, as a preliminary thereto, she changed her political and philosophical creed, abjuring absolutism and obscurantism, and espousing more liberal and progressive views.

This change of creed, so far as it really occurred, was not a hypocritical act of expediency; it was brought about by a little group of ardent enthusiasts who had already, before the Revolution, been chafing at the false position in which the Church was placed by her alliance with the State. At their head stood the Abbé de Lamennais himself, who had been going through a rapid process of evolution in his political thinking since the publication of the *Essai*. An Ultramontanist from the start, his primary loyalty was always to religious not to civil authority; and he could not but feel that religion was debased when used by the State for political ends. The ruling classes were not sincerely religious, he perceived; they professed and imposed religion for motives of expediency, but in

[38] The pillaging of the Church of St.-Germain l'Auxerrois, opposite the Louvre, during the brief period of the Revolution, sufficiently indicated the temper of the people.

[39] *Vie de Lacordaire*, I, 24. See the whole introductory chapter.

their hearts they were unbelievers, and their unbelief flowed down, in spite of all laws against heresy, through the whole system of public instruction. "Society," he charged, in a book published in 1826,[40] "is governed by a systematic atheism; religion is now simply a thing some one administers. It figures in the budget on the same plane with fine arts, theatres, and studs for horse-breeding." The only way to save the youth, said Lamennais, was to take education out of the hands of the State and put it into the hands of the Church. Pending legislation of this sort, there was no resort but to send the children to the *petits séminaires* intended to give primary education to young candidates for the priesthood, and later to the Jesuit colleges, or anywhere rather than to the University. Great was Lamennais's indignation when, in 1828, the Martignac ministry published ordinances imposing the University régime upon the Jesuit colleges, and restricting the number of pupils to be admitted to the *petits séminaires*. The next year he published a book entitled *Des Progrès de la Révolution et de la Guerre contre l'Église*, in which he demands "liberty" in the field of education—"liberty," a new war-cry on Catholic lips! To be sure, he takes great pains to distinguish his attitude from that of the out-and-out liberals who stood for the ideals of the French Revolution; and he says that in the early period of human history, when tradition had not yet suffered corruption, it was proper to deny the right of liberty of discussion; but "when a split already exists, when beliefs are divided, and innumerable opinions have succeeded the ancient faith, then unity can be reborn only at the issue of a free combat." As Catholics, he says, we can associate neither with the liberals nor with the conservatives; we form a group by ourselves, and need to become self-conscious, and to strengthen our intellectual position by a revival of higher education for the clergy, who are only too rightfully accused of being behind the times. This book became the charter of French Liberal Catholicism.

It is permissible to question the sincerity of a liberalism so obviously based upon expediency. It should be said, however, that Lamennais's political evolution did not stop here, and that associa-

[40] *De la Religion considérée dans ses rapports avec l'ordre politique et civil.*

tion with more thorough-going liberals rapidly changed his attitude. Foremost among those who thus influenced him were a brilliant young priest named Lacordaire, and a young nobleman, the Comte de Montalembert. Lacordaire was so disgusted with the reactionary tendencies of the French clergy that he thought of emigrating to America, and it was only because Lamennais's sudden conversion to liberalism gave him new hope that he decided to remain.[41] Montalembert was the leader of a group of young Catholics who were imbued with revolutionary ideas, and were on intimate terms with members of the Liberal party. If Lamennais was interested in nothing more than liberty for the Church, they were sincerely interested in liberty for all. These three men became the chief collaborators in a Liberal Catholic periodical known as *L'Avenir*, which began to appear shortly after the revolution of 1830, and which raised a tremendous storm of mingled applause and dissent.

To analyze the political doctrines of this periodical, or to follow the fortunes of its editors, does not come within our province. Suffice it to say that, if the impetuous Lamennais felt compelled to cut himself off from the Church on account of the stubborn opposition he encountered, the movement of thought which he initiated survived his excommunication. Lacordaire and Montalembert, ably seconded by men like Ozanam, Maret, and the Vicomte de Melun, succeeded so well in convincing the people that Christianity went hand in hand with liberty and democracy, that in 1848 the revolutionaries regarded the clergy as their natural allies, and many black-robed figures were to be seen in the Constituant Assembly. *L'Ère Nouvelle*, published during the Second Republic by Lacordaire, Ozanam, and Maret, repeated the success of *L'Avenir*, and seemed indeed to be a harbinger of a new era when Catholicism should be completely reconciled with modern social and political ideals.[42] Engulfed for a time in the wave of reaction that inundated France during the period of the Second Empire, the Liberal Catholic movement still persisted as an undercurrent, and sprang once more into prominence late in the century, when Leo

[41] Lacordaire's temper may be sufficiently indicated by a *bon mot* of his which his enemies were fond of quoting against him: "I hope to die a penitent Christian and an impenitent liberal."

[42] On the social program of the Liberal Catholics of '48, and the reasons for its failure, see *Catholicism and the Second French Republic*, by Ross Collins, Columbia University Press, 1923.

XIII began to show democratic sympathies. On its social and political side, Liberal Catholicism is still very much alive—witness M. Marc Sangnier and the *Ligue Nationale de la Démocratie*—and this is certainly one of the reasons why Catholicism, however it may be scorned by the intellectuals, is so deeply rooted to-day in the affections of the common people of France.

When Lacordaire spoke of himself as a "liberal," he meant primarily that he was a *political* liberal. In general, the Liberal Catholics of '30 and '48, like their modern descendants, had very little *theological* liberalism about them. Theological and political liberalism do not always go together, as every New Englander knows. The man who is strongly influenced by modern social ideals may be very little influenced by modern science and philosophy, and *vice versa*. Yet there were a few of the Liberal Catholics, such as Maret, who were liberal in both senses—Lamennais himself, after his separation from the Church, became a theological radical as well as a political revolutionary—and there were still others who, while only mildly interested in the political program of their associates, were vitally concerned with the problem of restating the Catholic faith in terms acceptable to the intelligentsia. It is upon this small but most significant group of theological liberals that we are to center our attention. Their effort was, in brief, to bring the defense of the faith up to date by adjusting it to the new philosophical situation which had developed since 1800. If we are to understand their program, we must first understand that situation.

In 1800, the prevailing philosophical tendency in France, outside the Church, was the "Sensualism" of Condillac, which, in the hands of Cabanis, Destutt de Tracy, and others, had taken on a strongly materialistic tinge. In the presence of this philosophy, Christian apologists naturally conceived their task to be either to defend spiritualism against materialism (as Frayssinous did), or to wage war upon philosophy in general, denying its right to exist (as the Traditionalists did), or to appeal to the heart from the decision of the head (as did Châteaubriand).

Very early in the century, however, a defection took place from the ranks of the school of Condillac, which marked the beginning of a general reaction against eighteenth-century philosophy—a re-

action as complete and dramatic as any which is recorded in the history of modern philosophy. Laromiguière began the defection by making a sort of Kantian distinction between sensations and ideas, the latter constituting the form of experience, the former only its matter. Maine de Biran, one of the ablest of the followers of Condillac, passed over by a series of cautious steps, each based on more careful psychological analysis than the last, to a thoroughgoing idealism. Even Cabanis, in his *Lettre sur les causes finales*, made concessions fatal to materialism.

In its divided state, the school of Condillac could offer no effective resistance to the vigorous attacks which Royer-Collard, who became professor at the Sorbonne in 1809, at once began to make upon it in behalf of the Scotch realistic philosophy. Still less could it withstand the flood of German influence which began to stream in as soon as peace was restored to Europe. Mme. de Staël's *De l'Allemagne*, suppressed in 1810, appeared in 1814, and made a great impression. Victor Cousin, after following Royer-Collard for a time, made a trip to Germany, and became an ardent devotee of German Idealism. At the period we are considering (1833), the Eclecticism of Cousin was all the rage. Its only serious rival was the social philosophy of Saint-Simon. Both these philosophies were religious, not to say theological, in tone. Saint-Simon heralded the coming of a "new Christianity"; Cousin seemed continually trying to go the theologians one better: as one wag expressed it, when the theologians spoke of the Holy Trinity, Cousin always spoke of the Most Holy Trinity. For the moment, then, philosophy was the friend, not the enemy of religion.[48]

Had the Catholics but realized it, their task was now much simplified: they had no longer to defend spiritualism against materialism, or theism against atheism; they had only to defend Catholic Christianity as the highest type of religion. It was the Golden Age of Romanticism in France; Victor Hugo had just produced his first dramas and George Sand her first novels. A spirit of ardent if somewhat sentimental idealism pervaded the

[48] A less positively friendly philosophy was that of Auguste Comte, then in its first phase. But, strange to say, one may search the philosophical literature of the period through, and find hardly a reference to his name. Damiron, in the 1835 edition of his *Essai*, added a couple of paragraphs on Comte, but treated him as a typical Saint-Simonian!

youth. They were much given to introspection, to brooding over the problem of human destiny, and speculating about the Key to the Great Mystery. The *mal de siècle* often expressed itself in the form of a yearning after the Infinite, and a sense of dissatisfaction with all things finite. The *besoin de croire*, the need to believe, in order to reach a state of mental peace and moral power, was pretty universally recognized; and the relativism of the earlier part of the century had given way to the conviction that absolute truth existed, and might be found. The great question was merely: "Where is absolute truth to be found?" Was it to be found in one specific religion, like Christianity, or was it revealed, in various stages of development, in all religions and all philosophies, marching on toward a final synthesis which one might already glimpse? Was Christianity final, or was it but a passing form of the absolute religion?

For the most part, the Catholic clergy did little to satisfy the religious hunger of the youth. They could not understand it; the whole world of thought from which it sprang was foreign to them. At the seminaries, philosophy was still discussed in Scholastic Latin; and thought had not moved since the days of Bossuet, when a certain tinge of Cartesian rationalism had been imparted to French Scholasticism. The younger clergy were most of them Traditionalists of one sort or another; they cherished the Traditionalist prejudice against *all* philosophy.

The religious periodicals did show a decided renewal of interest in intellectual problems. The *Annales de philosophie chrétienne*, founded in 1830 by Augustin Bonnetty, and the *Revue Européenne*, founded a year later, contained many able articles; but the Traditionalist hypothesis of a primitive revelation filled the whole horizon. "Are Champollion's discoveries in Egypt likely to confirm the truth of the Biblical account of the Exodus? What have geology and comparative philology to say in confirmation of the Book of Genesis and the theory of a single original tradition? What is the bearing of comparative religion upon the Primitive Revelation theory? What light does more recent history cast on the civilizing rôle of religion, and the destructive effect of skepticism?" Such questions as these are the constant themes of discussion. One might say that the historical approach dominated the whole apologetical enterprise.

But where was the philosopher who could speak to the youth in their own language; who could meet the Eclectic philosophers on their own ground, and work out a Christian system that should be comparable with their own? Where was the man both modern enough and philosophical enough and Christian enough to do it? Mgr. Frayssinous had now retreated into obscurity, discredited because of his alliance with the Government of Louis XVIII and Charles X. If his second series of *Conférences* (1814-1822) had already seemed out of date by reason of the changed philosophical situation, what could be expected of him now? Ballanche, like de Bonald, de Maistre, and Châteaubriand, was an old man; and his theories had little appeal to the new generation. Lamennais, in his seclusion at La Chênaie, surrounded by a little group of disciples and friends, was reported to be working on just such a system as was required; but the *Esquisse d'une Philosophie* did not appear until some years after its author's separation from the Church, and proved to be pantheistic rather than Christian.

It was from Strasbourg, instead, that the new philosophical leader was destined to issue his manifesto. It came in the year 1833, in the shape of a trenchant essay *On the Teaching of Philosophy in France in the Nineteenth Century*, by the Abbé Bautain, Father Superior of the *Petit Séminaire* at Strasbourg, and professor of philosophy in the University. In this essay, all the chief philosophical tendencies of the century were described, analyzed, and sharply criticized with a firmness of touch that could come only of intimate acquaintance with the doctrines in question, and seemed hardly to be expected of a priest. The school of Condillac, the Scotch school, and the Eclectic school, were all characterized, and dismissed with a negative verdict; but the author was just as severe —perhaps a trifle more severe—in his strictures upon the loose-knit thinking of Lamennais, and, above all, upon the arid Scholasticism of the seminaries. In place of all these, he proposed to develop a new Christian philosophy more in harmony with the interests and longings of the modern man. The book aroused great interest all over the Continent.

The following year, Bautain again attracted much attention by his *Reflections on the Institution of the Religious Conférences at Paris*. The conferences in question were the *Conférences* of

Notre-Dame, soon to be made famous by the genius of Lacordaire. Mgr. Quélen, Archbishop of Paris, had recently been approached by Frédéric Ozanam with a petition bearing the signatures of several hundred Parisian students, who asked that arrangements be made for a series of addresses designed to meet the intellectual problems of the younger generation more directly and frankly than was the custom. The students ventured to suggest the names of two men whom they thought capable of giving such a series of addresses: Lacordaire and Bautain.[44] Mgr. Quélen announced that their request would be granted at the coming Lenten season; he himself would inaugurate the series. One fancies that the pleasure of the students at the granting of their request was somewhat dampened by the prospect of having to listen to the Archbishop: he was a Legitimist of the old school, and wholly out of sympathy with the Liberal Catholic movement. Bautain, at any rate, felt that the ecclesiastical authorities were in danger of failing to meet the real needs of the students; and so, in a series of brilliant articles in the *Univers Religieux*, he described the student mind as it really was, and pointed out the folly of attempting to approach young Romanticists and young pantheists with a superannuated apologetic designed to meet the difficulties of eighteenth-century materialists and atheists.

The young men of to-day are not atheists, he insists. They will admit that without God "nothing is explicable in the universe. . . . There is neither science, nor ethics, nor society possible without that principle." Do not suppose, however, that they mean by this what would have been meant in the eighteenth century. These young men are neither theists nor deists, nor yet pantheists in the Spinozistic sense; they are idealistic pantheists, after the German style, believing in a "God who lives in Nature and in man, who is their principle and substance, who posits and preserves them both, by his development and his manifestation." With them, the old arguments aimed against materialism are out of place;

> they are nearer [says Bautain] to an excess of spiritualism in speculation. They almost doubt the existence of matter, and you will greatly oblige them by furnishing them with good reasons for granting it. . . . As for

[44] De Régny, *L'Abbé Bautain*, 192-195.

the immortality of the soul, *soyez tranquille:* they grant it to the extent of confusing it with eternity, and man lacks little of being God for them. It is the same with free-will, which we have tried to reinstate, in opposition to fatalism, by so many reasonings. They grant it, they insist upon it to the point of independence, only too happy if you succeed in convincing them that human free-will is not autonomy. . . . [Do not argue with them about the necessity of revelation; they find revelation everywhere. If you try to prove the Incarnation to them, they protest] that one incarnation is not enough; that they admit ten, twenty, thirty of them like the Hindus; and that even, to look at it philosophically, the life of man and of the world is one continuous incarnation of divinity. . . . In a word, the disposition of the French youth is not so much to reject *religion* as to admit *all the religions*, Christianity along with the rest, so as to work them all over in the alembic of criticism . . . to shape little by little with the materials furnished by mankind the great structure of a philosophical religion . . . or rather to create the system of true philosophy, which will enable the peoples of the future to dispense with all religion![45]

Who was this young Abbé, with the air of a trained philosopher, and so intimately acquainted with the student mind? There were doubtless many who asked themselves that question, as they read these articles. Some, indeed, seemed to feel that he was trying to read a lesson to the Archbishop,[46] and asked who he was to attempt to dictate to his superiors. Others, noting how he assailed with equal vehemence all the prevailing philosophical tendencies, asked in some alarm who this sceptic in the bosom of the Church might be—this destructive critic, who dared to lay a profane hand upon the time-honored scholastic system itself. It was known that on a recent trip to Paris he had been received "with kindness and favor mingled with reserve" by Mgr. Quélen; that Victor Cousin had offered him a chair in the Faculty at the Sorbonne, which he had refused; that he had greatly impressed the Parisian students with a series of addresses at the *Église Saint-Roch.*[47] Rumor, too, wove about his figure a certain glamor of romance. It was said that he was fabulously learned, and a doctor in all the five Faculties; that Hegel had pronounced him a greater constructive thinker than Cousin; that he was under the influence of an Alsatian saint, prophetess, and savant, Mlle. Humann, and a

[45] *Réflexions*, 29-34.
[46] De Régny, *L'Abbé Bautain*, 195.
[47] *Ibid.*, 192-195.

member of her esoteric band of mystic enthusiasts; that he was planning to drive the scholastic philosophy from all the seminaries of France, and replace it with his own philosophy; that although he had bitter antagonists among the clergy, who openly accused him of heresy, he was protected and assured of ecclesiastical advancement by powerful friends in high political position.[48]

How much there was in these rumors, and what manner of man it was who inspired them, we shall shortly inquire; but before we turn our attention to the Abbé Bautain and his philosophy, it will be necessary for us to glance a moment at the chief tendencies of Catholic thought in Germany at this period. It was from Strasbourg that this new philosopher hailed; and nothing that hails from Strasbourg can be understood in terms of French antecedents alone. Were we to forget this fact, we should be tempted to look upon Bautain as a Carlylian hero, bursting in upon the scene like a bolt from the blue, and altering the course of French Catholic thought by sheer force of genius. Something indeed does seem to burst in at this point and divert the stream of French Catholic thought; Bautain's appearance marks the beginning of a new and distinctive tendency, which continues down to our day; but it would be wrong to represent our philosopher in the guise of an intellectual Hercules, diverting the river of thought single-handed. We shall have a more just appreciation of his undoubted originality if we recognize at the start that his philosophy owes quite as much to German Romanticism as it does to French Traditionalism. Through Bautain,[49] the stream of German Catholic thought, which had been following its own separate course and developing characteristics of its own since the beginning of the century, was blended

[48] For some of these rumors and insinuations, see Campaux, *Le philosophe de Strasbourg: Étude sur l'Abbé Bautain et son école,* Nancy, 1876, 36, 41, 42. See also the anonymous book, *De l'enseignement philosophique de M. l'Abbé Bautain,* Paris, 1834, 630. Bautain held three doctorates, not five: doctor *ès lettres,* 1816; doctor of medicine, 1826; doctor of theology, 1835 (honorary degree from Tübingen). The Hegel anecdote is given later. The powerful friends referred to are Guizot, Cousin, and Humann, minister of finance, brother of Mlle. Humann.

[49] I say "through Bautain," because he was the first distinguished French Catholic thinker to be deeply influenced by German Catholic thought; but of course his writings were not the sole avenue through which German influences came into French Catholic thought at this period. The *Revue Européenne* frequently published articles by Baader and other German Catholic thinkers, and had a regular staff correspondent stationed at Munich.

once more with the stream of French Catholic thought, and out of the confluence of these two streams there issued a new philosophical tendency, which, like all things Alsatian, seemed a bit strange and foreign both to the French and to the Germans.

## IV

## Main Currents in German Catholic Thought, 1800-1833[50]

The disesteem into which not only Catholicism, but religion in general, had fallen at the beginning of the nineteenth century had been no less noticeable in Germany than in France. When Schleiermacher, the father of liberal Protestant theology, published his famous *Speeches on Religion* in 1799, he addressed them to "the cultured among her despisers";[51] and he was forced to spar skilfully for an opening in order to gain a hearing at all:

> It may be an unexpected and even a marvellous undertaking [he began] that any one should still venture to demand . . . attention for a subject so entirely neglected. . . . Now especially the life of cultivated people is far from anything that might bear even a resemblance to religion. . . . There was a time when you held it a mark of special courage to cast off partially the restraints of inherited dogma. You still were ready to discuss particular subjects, though it were only to efface one of those notions. Such a figure as religion moving gracefully, adorned in eloquence, still pleased you, if only that you wished to maintain in the gentler sex a certain feeling for sacred things. But that time is long past. Piety is now no more to be spoken of. . . . I can link the interest I require of you to nothing but your contempt. I will ask you, therefore, just to be well informed and thorough-going in your contempt.[52]

When religion was an object of contempt, Catholicism, *a fortiori*, was beneath contempt. It was a matter agreed upon among all educated men, says Goyau, that the Catholic idea was "sterile" and "superannuated":

> Their common arrogance with respect to the old religion [he says] was all the more striking because there was nothing affected or purposely

[50] See references to Werner, Schmid, Goyau, Lichtenberger, and Vermeil, in Bibliography, Part I, sections 1 and 3.

[51] *Reden über die Religion an die Gebildeten unter ihren Verächtern.*

[52] Oman's translation, London, 1893, 1, 2, 12.

insolent about it: they were quite sincere in attributing to the Roman Church the same place in the real world which it held in their own esteem; they spoke of it not exactly as a hostile force, but rather as an archaism. "The Church of Rome," said Herder, "is now but an ancient ruin, into which henceforth no new life can come."[53]

In the face of this widespread attitude, the Catholic clergy had themselves developed a sort of inferiority complex. Apologetically pruning and expurgating the teachings of the Church, so as to make them as little offensive as possible to the spirit of the Enlightenment, they had ended by rationalizing away all that was distinctive in their faith. In the catechisms of the day, Christianity was presented as "a sort of superior ethics, practically independent of dogma."[54]

> From the pulpit [said Staudenmaier] there still descended words, but not words of life. The priest had become an apostle of useful information; the texts concerned even the cultivation of potatoes, trees, meadows, grape alcohol. People left church full of stories warning them against drunkenness . . . telling how what had been taken for ghosts was nothing but a lot of freshly washed blankets spread out in the moonlight, forgotten by the maid; but they were empty of what they needed for the virtuous and Christian life, empty of that which leads heavenward.[55]

The story of the gradual revival of religion in Germany in the early nineteenth century presents many parallels to the Catholic renaissance in France, already described. Just as in France, it was the laity, not the clergy, who gave the initial push that started the religious landslide. Just as in France, it was the esthetic appeal *à la Châteaubriand* which first overcame the indifference of the German public and aroused their interest in religion. Just as in France, the movement started as something amorphous, something utterly unsectarian, something opposed to all set creeds and external codes of morality, but became rapidly Christian, and specifically Catholic—a phenomenon doubly astounding in the land of Luther.

The contrast appears, however, when we note that the religious movement became consciously and technically philosophical in

[53] Goyau, *L'Allemagne religieuse. Le Catholicisme*, I, 161.
[54] *Ibid.*, 162.
[55] Lauchert, *Franz Anton Staudenmaier*, Freiburg, 1901, 27.

Germany much sooner than it did in France, and that it was not compromised, as in France, by being bound up with the reactionary movement in politics. This latter statement needs qualification, of course. The wave of political reaction which swept over Europe after 1815 undoubtedly worked in favor of Catholicism in Germany, as it did everywhere; and many of the leaders of the Catholic revival were at the same time ardent supporters of the Holy Alliance in its policy of suppression. Görres, the founder of the Munich school, was a Jacobin in his youth—editor of a revolutionary sheet in Coblentz—and his conversion to Catholicism was in the first instance a conversion to political conservatism. In his Munich period, he poured forth a flood of ridicule and abuse upon religious and political liberalism alike, in his *Historisch-politische Blätter*. It has even been claimed that he never became a sincere Catholic, but that, like the present-day "atheist Catholics" of the *Action Française*, he favored Catholicism for purely political reasons.[56] However that may be, it should be insisted upon that men of Görres' type played no such leading part in the Catholic revival in Germany as did de Bonald and de Maistre in France. Not politicians and publicists, but philosophers, played the leading rôle in Germany. We may, in fact, dismiss the influence of political reaction with this brief mention, and risk the generalization that *the religious renaissance in Germany was due to the rise of Romanticism.*[57]

Now the Romantic movement had three chief aspects: esthetic, religious, philosophical. In its esthetic aspect, it was a revolt against classicism in literature, art, and music; an outburst of impatience with set forms, sharp contours, classic restraint; a riot of emotionalism and individualism succeeding upon an age of conventionalism; expressing itself in warm colors, rich harmonies, odd and unusual diction; a revival of interest in the literature and art of the Middle Ages, whose mixture of the sublime, the grotesque, the mysterious, the miraculous, and the chivalrous was strangely alluring to the imagination of a sophisticated and disillusioned generation. In its religious aspect, Romanticism was a

[56] Lichtenberger, *Histoire des idées religieuses en Allemagne*, III, 379. The judgment is unfair. Görres' mysticism and occultism helped in his conversion.

[57] Goyau, *op. cit.*, Bk. II, chap. I, "Romantisme et Catholicisme."

revolt against the cold moralism and rationalism of eighteenth-century orthodoxy and eighteenth-century "natural religion"; a sudden victory of the religion of feeling over that "religion within the bounds of mere reason"[38] which Kant had so ably expounded; a revival of mediaeval mysticism and mediaeval occultism. In its philosophical form, Romanticism was a revolt against the rationalistic epistemology and mechanistic cosmology of the eighteenth century; it set faith and intuition over against reason, and claimed, with Pascal, that "the heart has reasons that the reason knows not of"; it rejected the concept of *mechanism*, and universalized the concept of *organism*. It went back for sustenance and inspiration to the great monistic, idealistic, and pantheistic systems of the past—neo-Platonism, Spinozism, and Jacob Boehme's mystic theosophy—for in all these systems it glimpsed the great Idea of which all the dazzling philosophical speculations of the period, from Goethe to Hegel, are but amplifications: the idea that the universe is a living Organism, a manifold Whole, developing in Nature and in History.

It will be seen that, in each of its three forms, Romanticism was favorable to religion in general and Catholicism in particular; yet in each case it held a hidden menace for the Catholic faith, if Catholicism were to accept too uncritically the aid of this new and unexpected ally. Romanticism might feel a certain admiration for Catholicism, it might even submit to baptism and formally embrace the faith; but it was not Catholic at heart. It wanted religion for purposes of its own, not religion for religion's sake: it was in love with the gorgeous appurtenances of stately worship; it enjoyed the religious thrill as a new and altogether exquisite sensation; it taught itself to believe the dogmas of the Church, because without a certain degree of belief the religious thrill was not forthcoming—but it never took its religion in real, deadly earnest.

This is particularly true of esthetic Romanticism. If we examine the motives which led to the veritable epidemic of conversions to Catholicism which broke out among the German *literati* in the early nineteenth century, we shall find that the esthetic

[38] Kant, *Religion innerhalb der Grenzen des blossen Vernunft.*

motive predominates. The Catholic movement among them coincided precisely with the reaction against Hellenism and neo-classicism in favor of Christian painting, architecture, and literature. The neo-classicist view of Christian art and literature might be summed up in the words of Herder: "Among the bones of martyrs, the sound of bells and organs, censers, and prayers for indulgence, no Muse resides." The reaction toward Catholicism among the German *literati* dates from the moment when the unfairness of this judgment began to be appreciated. First came the publication in 1805, of Arnim and Brentano's[59] great collection of mediaeval *Volkslieder*, entitled *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*, which inspired Eichendorff, La Motte-Fouqué, and others to return to mediaeval sources for poetic themes. At about the same time the brothers Boisserée began to make their famous collection of mediaeval painting and sculpture.[60] Then, in 1808, Friedrich Schlegel astonished all his friends by embracing the Catholic faith. The Boisserées, with whom he was personally acquainted, had convinced him of the superiority of Christian art over Greek art; his own Oriental studies had convinced him that Oriental literature in general, and the Bible in particular, had in it a "sense of the infinite" lacking in Greek literature. In his *History of Ancient and Modern Literature*, published in 1812, he presented the Bible as "a source of poetry and art which should be for our time what Homer had been for antiquity."[61]

While public taste in Germany was thus gradually overcoming its distaste for Christian art and literature, a parallel movement was taking place in the German art-colony at Rome, hitherto the citadel of neo-classicism. There, under the leadership of Friedrich Overbeck, a group of revolters, popularly dubbed the "Nazarenes," arose, who denounced classic art as frigid and conventional, and extolled the spontaneity and fervid sincerity of Giotto and Fra Angelico. From admiring the genius of the great Italian painters, they were soon led to envy their faith. Without religion, they felt, such art was impossible; if they were to paint like Giotto they must believe as he did. As Overbeck put it himself, "Only the unceasing prayer of the heart is capable of maintaining the

[59] Brentano was later converted to Catholicism.

[60] Now in the Munich *Pinacothek*.

[61] See Goyau, *op. cit.*, I, 183-191.

enthusiasm of the artist. . . . Christian art means nothing but the full and appropriate expression . . . of a living faith, with which the artist must be full; and the aim of Christian art can be only to awake and sustain that faith in others, or to gain hearts to the truth through beauty."[62]

These words of Overbeck clearly indicate the motives which led multitudes of young Romanticists to the Catholic faith. They felt the need of some religion, because they felt religion would supply the enthusiasm without which artistic creativity is impossible. Protestantism, with its stark, bare churches, and its dour depreciation of the esthetic side of life, was out of the question; Catholicism, with its architecture and stately ritual, drew them with a strange fascination. Even Novalis, whose background was severely Protestant, wrote a series of *Hymns to the Virgin*, and dreamed of a new religion in which Catholicism and Protestantism should be reconciled. It is obvious that the Catholicism of these young esthetes was in many cases only skin-deep. Led "to the truth through beauty," they interpreted "the truth" to suit themselves. Mediaeval Catholicism attracted them less because it was Christian than because it was Latin or Teutonic. In church, their glance rested not upon the tortured face of the Christ upon the Crucifix, but upon the serene countenance of some Italian Madonna, or the grinning visage of some dwarfish monster, peeping from beneath the pulpit-stair like the genius of the Teutonic races. Suffering, sacrifice, and penance were foreign terms to them; their real religion, had they avowed it, was the cult of self-expression, self-development, and "union with the Infinite"—a cult whose origin, as we shall see, was largely extra-ecclesiastical.

What we have called the "religious" aspect of Romanticism had its antecedents in a revival of mysticism which began toward the end of the eighteenth century. We are accustomed to think of the eighteenth century as a period when rationalism and moralism held sway; but in every rationalistic period there can be traced an undercurrent or counter-tendency of religious emotionalism and anti-intellectualism, showing that the starved and outraged instincts

[62] This is precisely the idea conveyed in his famous painting "The Triumph of Religion in the Arts." On Overbeck and the Nazarenes, see Goyau, *op. cit.*, I, 228-245.

are still operative in all their force, waiting only for the moment when their suppressed energies shall accumulate to the exploding-point. So, in the very midst of the eighteenth century, we find little circles of congenial spirits gathering here and there in Germany to foster in one another the flame of mystic piety, and bid common defiance to the chilly atmosphere of their century. Some of these circles, such as the Pietistic circles founded much earlier by Spener and Francke, or the famous community at Herrnhut founded by Zinzendorf, were characterized by a somewhat narrow and fanatical piety, and lacked the broad cosmopolitanism which we associate with Romanticism. Smaller, but more significant from our point of view, were the esoteric groups of admirers gathered about such outstanding figures as Oetinger (1702-1782), Hamann (1730-1788), Jung-Stilling (1740-1817), the Princess Gallitzin (1748-1806), Matthias Claudius (1740-1815), and Father Sailer (1751-1832). These esoteric circles were characterized by a breadth of opinion that made it possible for Catholics, Jews, and free-thinkers to remain the closest of friends; by a type of piety which harked back to the classical mystics for its inspiration; and by an interest in the occult and the marvellous, most unusual at that period in cultivated society. Eliminate commercialism and the "cult of success" from contemporary "New Thought," compound it with Spiritualism and Theosophy, and you will have a fair idea of the atmosphere of these mystic circles. Then add to the influence of these mystics the influence of Jean-Jacques Rousseau and his "religion of feeling," and you will understand what the word "religion" meant to those of the Romanticists who professed to be religious.

It is not hard to see why mysticism and the "religion of feeling" played into the hands of the Roman Catholic Church. The classical Christian mystics are most of them regularly canonized saints of the Roman Church, and mystic piety has always thrived better within the monastery than amongst the Protestant sects, where it has often had to struggle for its life against the rationalistic spirit of disputation and inquiry. Yet, on the other hand, Romantic mysticism was only accidentally Catholic; and, in many of its aspects, it was open to grave suspicion from the Catholic point of view. It drew its inspiration not only from the orthodox

mystics, but from Jewish, Hindu, and even Swedenborgian sources, and it fraternized scandalously with certain self-styled "prophets" who, though outside the pale of the Church, claimed impiously to have immediate insight into things divine—a presumption always to be feared in mystics. Worst of all, it was infected with the spirit of Rousseau; and, in its tendency to identify the experience of the divine with the experience of deep emotion, it was often led to deify the grossest of our animal instincts because of the flood of emotion they release when stimulated. A type of piety that smacked of Goethe and Jean-Paul could not but be suspect in the eyes of the Church—especially when it was associated with wild theosophical speculations.

It is a bit difficult to dissociate the religious from the philosophical aspect of Romanticism; for it was precisely in the mystic circles to which we have alluded, that the Romanticist philosophy[63] was first elaborated. Some of these mystics, to be sure—especially Catholic mystics like the Princess Gallitzin—were primarily interested in "practical mysticism," or the culture of the devotional life; but there were others who felt it necessary to defend their right to be religious by attacking current rationalism and materialism, and setting up a mystic philosophy or theosophy instead. Typical of these more philosophical mystics is Friedrich Christoph Oetinger, called "the magician of the South."[64] A Protestant pastor, respected for his noble character and zeal in the cure of souls, but suspected for his extravagant theosophical speculations; a savant, versed in mathematics, natural philosophy, anatomy, and metaphysics; the translator, and for a time, the exponent of Swedenborg; the popularizer of Jacob Boehme—altogether, he is a most interesting figure. Trained in the Leibnitz-Wolffian philosophy, he early reacted against its rationalism, and set out on a life-long search for direct and intuitive knowledge of the divine. He cultivated the acquaintance of all who claimed such knowledge—

[63] The reader is warned that, when I speak of the "Romanticist Philosophy," I refer not only to the philosophy of the Romanticists in the narrow sense (men like Schleiermacher, the Schlegels, and Novalis) but also to the common underlying concepts and tendencies of the whole period of the rise of post-Kantian Idealism. This use of the term is quite common in French philosophical writings. Cf. Bréhier's use of it in his admirable little book on *La Philosophie Allemande* (Collection Payot).

[64] On Oetinger, see Lichtenberger, *op. cit.*, I, 256-267; see also his fascinating *Selbstbiographie.*

Pietists, physicians and alchemists, learned Jews with their Cabalistic lore, simple peasants like Marcus Völker, who claimed to possess *cognitio centralis*, mystics of all sorts, however unorthodox. Not a systematic philosopher himself, he nevertheless set in motion a hundred currents of thought which later combined to form the Romantic philosophy. Through him the influence of Jacob Boehme became a part of the Romantic movement, an influence which can be traced in all the systems of the day, including the Hegelian system itself.

Philosophical Romanticism, as we have said, had two chief tenets: the epistemological primacy of faith and intuition, and the organic nature of the cosmos. Both these doctrines may be found in the writings of Oetinger; but it remained for later and greater philosophers to work them out in detail. The Romantic view of faith and intuition was most completely and profoundly stated by Jacobi; the Romantic view of the cosmos, by Goethe, Schleiermacher, and Schelling.

Jacobi's philosophy developed out of a criticism of Kant's *Kritik der Reinen Vernunft.* The logical outcome of Kant's position, says Jacobi, is complete solipsism; "pure reason" has no right to infer the existence of any Thing-in-itself. What then? Are we to decide to become skeptics? Not so, says Jacobi: we have an immediate certainty of the existence of an external world; if reason cannot prove it, so much the worse for reason! As a matter of fact, all rational knowledge is second-hand knowledge; for all proof rests back upon assumptions and intuitions which need no proof. Reason alone gives us an abstract, subjectivistic, deterministic view of things; the real world, the world where man is free and God reigns, is accessible only to a higher faculty than reason, which Jacobi in his earlier writings frankly calls faith.[65]

Jacobi was a Romanticist in his epistemology only. Monism and pantheism were anathema to him. Spinoza's pantheism, with its absolute determinism, seemed to him to be the classical example of what the rationalistic "method of demonstration" logically leads to. Strangely enough, however, Jacobi was destined to play a

[65] Later he confused the issue by calling it Reason *(Vernunft)* and distinguishing it from discursive reasoning or Understanding *(Verstand)*. See McGiffert, *Rise of Modern Religious Ideas*, 114-121.

leading rôle, against his will, in the repopularizing of Spinoza. His book on Spinoza's system,[66] although full of hostile criticism, did much to awaken interest in the great Jewish philosopher. His famous conversation with Lessing, from whom he drew the avowal that he was a convinced disciple of Spinoza, caused a veritable furore in the learned world when it was published. From this time on, the influence of Spinozism grew apace among the Romanticists—although it was a "transmogrified" Spinozism which its own author might not have recognized. Professor McGiffert has pointed out that Herder's little book called *Gott*, published in 1787, was the prime source from which the Romanticists drew their interpretation of Spinoza. "Reading him in the light of the philosophy of Leibnitz, who substituted force for substance and thus broke the old dualism of thought and extension, Herder was able," says McGiffert, "to preserve the monism of Spinoza's system without sacrificing spiritual idealism or the reality of human individuality."[67] Thus reinterpreted, Spinozism became an appropriate framework into which the new scientific ideas of electrical force (Galvani) and vital force (Cuvier and the biological "vitalists") could be fitted. Partly under the influence of Herder's *Gott*, and partly under the influence of his own scientific researches, the poet Goethe evolved his magnificent picture of a living, growing, *organic* universe, in which nothing is inert, and nothing merely mechanical, but all is athrill with hidden vital force. This splendid *Weltanschauung*—which Goethe identified with Spinoza's—exercised a profound influence upon all the philosophy of the Romantic epoch. We are accustomed to think that Goethe put into the language of poetic vision ideas which he borrowed from the great philosophers of his generation; it is more likely that they attempted to rationalize and justify, in dull and ponderous prose, the intuitions that they got from him.

It should be evident at a glance that philosophical Romanticism was a most dangerous ally for Roman Catholicism to adopt—more dangerous, on the whole, than either esthetic or religious Romanticism. On the epistemological side, Romanticism tended, to be sure, to circumvent the attacks of eighteenth-century rationalism

[66] *Ueber die Lehre des Spinoza,* published 1785.

[67] *Op. cit.,* 191; cf. his article in the *Hibbert Journal* for July, 1905.

upon Christian theology; but it did so only by abandoning rational argument altogether, and granting Kant's contention that the reason is incompetent in the noumenal realm. It was as hostile to Scholastic rationalism as to Voltairean rationalism; and by appealing to immediate intuition it undermined authority, revelation, and dogma as well as reason. On the cosmological side, Romanticism put an end to eighteenth-century materialism and mechanism; but it led to pantheism. The task of the German Catholic philosophers and theologians was a difficult one: to utilize what was acceptable in the Romanticist philosophy as a means of combatting the anti-religious philosophy of the eighteenth century, while rejecting those aspects of Romanticism which were imperilling the Catholic faith. This task they undertook with unequal success, but with uncommon vigor.

At the period we are considering (1833), there were three main currents in German Catholic thought: "the rationalism of the eighteenth century, then in a state of decadence, Romantic neo-mysticism in full bloom, and new-style ultramontanism, fostered by Belgian and French propaganda, spread by the Jesuits from 1814 on."[68] The "rationalistic" tendency (whose rationalism was considerably modified by the influence of Kant) was predominant at Freiburg and Bonn; the Romanticist tendency, at Munich, and to a lesser extent at Tübingen and Vienna; the "ultramontanist" tendency (whose philosophy was neo-scholastic), at Mayence and Strasbourg.

The rationalistic tendency in German Catholic thought at this period is best represented by Georg Hermes (1775-1831), professor in the Faculty of Catholic Theology at Bonn University.[69] Hermes professes to start his investigations into the truth of the Christian religion in a state of complete doubt—not merely provisional or hypothetical doubt, like that of Descartes, but real doubt. Any other attitude would be unethical:

> We ought not to *wish* anything to be true [he says], or, in other words, we ought to be without bias. We ought, during investigation, to detach ourselves in theory from all systems of theology and religion, in

[68] Vermeil, *J. A. Moehler et l'école catholique de Tubingue.*

[69] On Hermes, see Goyau, *op. cit.*, II, 6-12; Werner, *Gesch. der Katholischen Theologie*, 405 ff, 423 ff.

so far as we have not recognized them to be certainly true; they should all be equally valid and equally inadequate in our eyes.[70]

Hermes proposes, then, to construct a system of true religious ideas by first arriving at a few primary and necessary rational certainties, and then deducing their consequences. The result, oddly enough, turns out to be a somewhat amputated and rationalized version of Catholic theology.

This undoubtedly sounds "rationalistic"; but the rationalism of Hermes differs widely from the rationalism of Descartes and the *Aufklärung*. When he says that "reason" is capable of proving the existence of God and the truth of the Christian religion, he means, not the "pure" or "speculative" reason, but the "practical" reason of Kant. With a "philosophy of concepts" he will have nothing to do; and for this reason he attacks the Scholastic philosophers with great vehemence. The ultimate judge, both in morals and in theology, is *conscience*. Just as the truth of the Ten Commandments rests upon the fact that the "categorical imperative" confirms them, so the assurance of God's existence rests upon the fact that it is a necessary postulate of the practical reason. Moreover, conscience assures us that in creating the world, God acted with our good in mind, and not just for His own glory; that would have been egoistic, and conscience condemns egoism. If Hermes appears to rest his case on "reason," it is because he distinguishes between reason and understanding, *Vernunft* and *Verstand*, as Kant—and Jacobi—had done before him. Whether he takes *Vernunft* in a purely Kantian sense, or whether he stretches it to include "faith," or intuition, as Jacobi did, is rather hard to determine.

Apart from the possible influence of Jacobi, Hermes shows not a trace of Romanticism. Although he was a contemporary of Schelling, his works might have been written in the latter part of the eighteenth century. At the period we are discussing, his influence was very great. Even the formal condemnation of "Hermesianism" by the Pope in 1835 failed to dampen the ardor of his enthusiastic followers; and they continued (with the backing of the Prussian government) to defend his views for some years.

[70] Goyau, *loc. cit.*

At one remove from the rationalism of Hermes is the remarkable philosophical system of Anton Günther (1783-1863), a Viennese priest. Like Hermes, he seeks a foundation for his philosophy that is beyond the reach of doubt, and he finds it, like Descartes, in self-consciousness. The *I* is the only *noumenon* with which I am acquainted; all other objects in my world are mere phenomena. I have a real *idea* of myself; I have only *concepts* of other objects.[71] If, therefore, I am to have a true idea of the World, I must examine it where it impinges upon my own consciousness, and see it, as it were, from within. The first important fact which I note, is that I, the knowing and willing Subject, am limited by an Object which is at the same time foreign to me, and my own—my body, with its sense-organs and sensual appetites. If, then, I am to take myself as the microcosm which reveals the nature of the macrocosm—and if I do not do so, I am compelled to substitute *concepts* for real *ideas*—I must conclude that the World, like myself, is composed of three substances: Spirit, Nature, and their synthesis in consciousness. I must conclude that there is no absolutely dead matter, but that Nature, seen from within, would everywhere reveal that same vital urge, that same striving for self-development, which I find in my own physical organism and animal instincts. I must conclude, finally, that the World, although three in substance, is one in form; for my body and spirit are united "formally" in my consciousness. But the World itself is not the ultimate Being; it is as finite, dependent, and imperfect as I am. It demands as its *Urgrund* an infinite, independent, perfect Being, God. God's nature can be inferred from the World's, as the World's can be inferred from mine—not by *direct* analogy, however, but by *inverse* analogy. The World is *der contraponirte Gott.* The World is one in form and three in substance; God is one in substance and three in form: Subject, Object, and their unity; Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.[72]

Günther's system was characterized by his opponents as "dualistic." It is indeed full of sharp contrasts: "idea" and "concept,"

[71] The distinction between *Idée (ideelles Denken)* and *Begriff*, corresponding to *Vernunft* and *Verstand*, was already made by Hermes.

[72] On Günther, see Schmid, *Wissenschaftliche Richtungen*, 7-12; Werner, *op. cit.*, 452-463.

"spirit" and "nature," divine Spirit and human spirit, God and the *Weltkreatur*, stand sharply opposed to one another. We are nearer to Kant, with his "two worlds," than to Schelling with his *Identitätslehre*. This tendency to dualism sprang largely from Günther's fear of pantheism. He felt that the Romanticist tendency to soften the contrasts between God and man, God and the world, would be the death of religion; and he fought Romantic monism with all his might. Nevertheless, in his whole philosophy of Nature, the influence of the Romantic concept of organism is evident; and, under the influence of this same concept, he was led, by the criticism of his pantheizing opponents, to blur some of his sharpest distinctions. There is, he admitted, but one Absolute Being, God. If we assert that the World is independent of God, we do not mean that it exists in and through itself *(durch sich)*, but only that it has a life of its own, by and for itself *(für sich)*. It is not separate from God *quoad substantiam*, but only *quoad phaenomenon*. Thus, after starting with Descartes, Günther ended at a point none too remote from contemporary Idealism. He was known among his many admirers, not altogether inappropriately, as "the Catholic Hegel."

The school of Bonn and the school of Vienna represent the declining influence of the Enlightenment. Even in them, the influence of Romanticism can be traced here and there; but, if we wish to see the full effect of Romanticism upon German Catholic thought, we shall have to turn our attention to the school of Munich.

"Munich," says Goyau, "thanks to Schelling and thanks to Baader, was the only capital city in Germany where philosophical speculation passed as an auxiliary of the Roman faith."[73] Not that these two men created the "school of Munich"; they were only two stars in the galaxy of celebrities that Joseph Görres had gathered about his "Round Table": Brentano and the brothers Boisserée, Romanticists of the esthetic type; Windischmann, Döllinger, and other scholarly professors; Görres himself, and other noted publicists; "literary men, artists, jurists, theologians, Romanticists of yesterday and parliamentarians of to-morrow el-

[73] *Op. cit.*, II, 85.

bowed each other and associated with each other there for over twenty years."[74] The reputation of the school of Munich was European; one always made it a point to pass through Munich when returning from Rome. Lamennais, Cardinal Wiseman, and many other eminent foreigners graced the Round Table with their presence for longer or shorter periods. Nevertheless, without Baader and Schelling, the School of Munich would have lost more than half its lustre. In their brilliant and daring speculations, the Romantic tendency in Catholic thought, nowhere more dominant than at Munich, found its complete and most untrammelled expression.

Franz Xaver von Baader (1765-1841) belongs to that group of cosmopolitan mystics out of which what we have called the "religious Romanticism" of the latter part of the eighteenth century took its rise. Oetinger and Saint-Martin influenced him deeply; Meister Eckhart and Jacob Boehme were his favorite authors. Although a Catholic by training and preference, he had read far less of the Fathers and the Scholastics than of Medicine, chemistry, modern philosophy, and Cabalistic lore. He spent some years in a series of futile negotiations with certain Russian high officials, looking towards the reunion of the Eastern and Western Churches; he hoped that the reconciliation of Catholicism and Protestantism might eventually be effected; and, although he died a Catholic, he sacrificed his popularity in the last years of his life by inveighing against the "dictatorship of the Papacy," which seemed to him to be the great obstacle to Church unity. Essentially a moderate and a liberal, he was equally opposed to "Revolution" and to "Stagnation," in the political as well as in the religious sphere; he looked upon the Encyclopedists and the Jesuits with equal abomination. To reconcile politics with religion, religion with science, reason with faith, freedom with authority, pantheism with theism, naturalism with supernaturalism—these were a few of his ambitions.

Baader's system—for he had a clear, consistent system, in spite of the fact that he left behind him nothing but scattered essays and oracular aphorisms[75]—has been described as *Relative Super-*

[74] *Op. cit.*, II, 89.

[75] His works were collected and published by his pupil Hoffman, Leipzig, 1851.

*naturalism.* The term is exact.[76] Reality, according to Baader, is arranged in a series of "regions" or "circles," which stand to one another in a relation of "higher" to "lower," or, more graphically, are included one within the other like a series of concentric circles. Each one of these regions draws its life from the next above, and its nourishment from the next below; each is "supernatural" and mysterious when viewed from below, but natural and comprehensible when viewed from above. Thus man is a supernatural being to the animals, but the animals are quite comprehensible to man, for their narrower circle of life is included in his wider. The widest and highest region, the all-inclusive sphere, is that of the Divine Life, from which all life is derived. This region is supernatural to us, as our human region is supernatural to all lower regions.

Ideally, each creature stands in an "organic" or "dynamic" relation of free and docile subordination to the Divine Life as it flows down from the superior regions. When it thus opens itself receptively to superior influences, a germ of higher life is awakened within it, and begins to push up blindly toward a higher region, like a seedling quickened by the rays of the sun. This is its second or supernatural birth. But this higher life of harmony with the Divine is possible only through self-sacrifice and self-forgetfulness; and the universal law of polarity always makes it possible that the creature may affirm itself instead of denying itself, may attempt to live by its own powers instead of relating itself to higher powers, and so cut itself off from its Creator. Not that it is possible to live apart from God! Whether we will or no, we are governed by His laws; but we may choose between love and coercion, between an *organic* and a *mechanical* relation to our Creator. Once fallen out of organic into mechanical relations, our plight is serious indeed. The moral law becomes to us something external and coercitive, like Kant's Categorical Imperative—which Baader called an "Ethic for Devils."[77] The whole supernatural realm becomes to us a closed book. Even inferior Nature comes to be conceived mechanically, and her hidden life-forces, which reveal themselves only

[76] He himself preferred the term *spiritual-realen Theismus*, which he contrasted with the "Deism" of Kant and the "Pantheism" of Hegel.

[77] Baader, *Werke*, I, 55.

to the view from inward out, are overlooked. Nothing can remedy this state of blindness, isolation, and exaggerated subjectivity but a genuine incursion of redemptive love from a higher region. Even so, the process of redemption is tragic: it involves the death of the old life, which, breaking up and dissolving in its own fires, and passing through a crisis such as that which creates water out of hydrogen and oxygen, thus at last becomes ductile and malleable material for the divine Artist.[78] In losing its old life, it finds its true self; for Baader's God, unlike the Absolute of Schelling's earlier philosophy, is no all-consuming One who "eats up his creatures"; they find their true individuality only in Him.[79] Thus are pantheism and theism reconciled: by avoiding the sharp dualism of the older theism while retaining the transcendence of God and the free individuality of man, for which the older pantheism had no room. Divide Spinoza by Descartes, Hegel by Kant, or Schelling by Günther, and the quotient is Baader.

Baader's theory of knowledge is of a piece with his cosmology. As our life and health depend upon our maintaining organic relations with the Life-Giver, so our intellectual health depends upon our maintaining organic relations with the object to be known. Knowing is an act of the whole nature, intellect, feeling, and will; a merely intellectual type of knowledge implies mechanical, non-organic relations between subject and object. In the perfect act of knowledge, there is a complete union of subject and object; Baader frequently compares it to sexual intercourse. Without the experience of God, without more or less complete union with God, there is therefore no knowledge of God. All rationalistic arguments which, like Günther's or Descartes', attempt to infer the existence of God from the existence of something else, are doomed to failure. How can one "know God without God"? The real proof of God's existence lies in the fact that some men are already living a supernatural life of heavenly harmony, quickened and sustained from above, and all have moments of awe and self-loathing when, in spite of themselves, they vaguely perceive that they are in rapport with a higher realm, where their true happiness lies.

[78] Baader, *Werke*, III, 283, note. [79] *Ibid.*, III, 285.

Baader does not attempt to give any rational proof of the truth of his philosophy; that would be contrary to his principles. "All science," he says, "forms a *circle*, whose two extremities are united, so that it is impossible to perceive where they are joined."[80] No one criterion of truth is therefore possible; the parts of the system mutually confirm each other. There are in reality three great criteria of truth, which must sustain one another: the immediate testimony of God to the soul of the mystic, the verdict of social authority or "common sense," and the conclusions of individual reason. God is infallible in himself; but the man who fanatically trusts his mystic intuitions, without checking them up with the findings of reason and common sense, is apt to go astray. God's truth comes through society; he who falls out of organic relations with society, falls out of relation with God. Society, when organically related to God—this means the Christian church, which is a social body reconciled to God through Christ—has a *communicated* infallibility. The individual, in so far as he coördinates himself with such a society, has a *conditional* infallibility; his reason can be trusted. Knowledge is born of the intercourse of the individual mind with the social mind. Society, as the "male" principle in the generation of knowledge, necessarily has the initiative; but it must not "rape" the individual reason. A philosophy based on individual reasoning alone, on the other hand, is no better than masturbation. Not the blind submission of the individual to society, but the "free coördination" of his private judgment with social authority is the way to infallible certitude. Freedom and authority, Voltaire and Lamennais, are thus reconciled.[81]

The philosophy of the school of Munich is usually described as "Neo-Schellingian." Schelling was of course the most famous of the philosophers who lent their aid to the Catholic Renaissance in Bavaria; but his influence must be regarded as secondary to Baader's. Baader's philosophy was worked out completely as early as 1809, when he published his remarkable *Beiträge zur dyna-*

[80] This paragraph is based on two articles by E. Jourdain in the *Revue Européenne*, III, 65 ff, 182 ff, on Baader's philosophy..

[81] On Baader's philosophy, see Vermeil, *op. cit.*, 20, 21, 122-125; Schmidt, *op. cit.*, 16-43; Werner, *op. cit.*, 443-452; and Volume I of Baader's *Werke*, which contains his most characteristic writings, and a good Introduction by his pupil Hoffmann.

*mischen Philosophie im Gegensatze der Mechanischen.* Schelling never influenced him except as a horrible example; on the contrary, it was under Baader's influence that Schelling evolved, in his later years, to a semi-Catholic position, and came to join the school of Munich. Baader was never satisfied with Schelling's philosophy, even in its latest form; he used to refer to it as a "pantheistic *ragoût* with Christian sauce."[82] If we are to name the most powerful exponent of philosophical Romanticism in the history of German Catholic thought, we must undoubtedly point to Franz Baader. It is hard to overestimate the extent of his influence; its scope was international. At the period we are considering, the *Revue Européenne* had for several years been endeavoring to acquaint the French public with his teachings; and its Munich correspondent, Jourdain, introduced an article on Baader's theory of certitude with the remark that this theory was "at the same time that of almost all the learned Catholics in Germany."[83]

To complete our picture of the philosophical situation in Germany in 1833, we need only refer briefly to two other schools, the school of Tübingen and the school of Mayence.

At Tübingen, located near the center of Catholic Germany, the influence of Hermes and Günther mingled with that of Baader, and Rationalism struggled with Romanticism; but, on the whole, it was Romanticism that prevailed. Staudenmaier and Kuhn, the Tübingen philosophers, share with Günther a certain alarm at the pantheistic leanings of the Munich school; but they are much more severe in their criticisms of Hermes and Günther than in their criticisms of Baader; and the Romanticist conception of *organism* pervades all their teaching. The Tübingen school was not so much interested in philosophical speculation for its own sake as was the Munich school; its greatest figure was not a philosopher, but a historian and theologian: Johann Adam Moehler, author of the famous *Symbolik*.[84] None the less, it played a most important part in the diffusion of philosophical Romanticism; for it applied the Romanticist ideas of organism and development specifically and in detail to the Catholic Church and the dogmas of the Catholic

[82] Goyau, II, 82.
[83] *Revue Européenne*, I, 304.
[84] Moehler was transferred to Munich shortly before his death in 1838; but his life was given to the upbuilding of the Tübingen school.

faith. It was largely from the Tübingen theologians that the Catholic "Modernists" got their notion of the "evolution of dogma" and of the Church as a developing organism.[85]

The school of Mayence represents a tendency radically different from all the preceding. Its two founders, Colmar and Liebermann, were Alsatians who had been driven from Strasbourg by the French Revolution. Educated by the Jesuits, like all the Strasbourg clergy, they imparted to the school of Mayence a strong ultramontanist tinge, quite unique in Germany. Whereas the Rationalist and Romanticist schools of Bonn, Vienna, Munich, and Tübingen were at one in their contempt of mediaeval scholasticism, the school of Mayence was strictly and aggressively scholastic, and opposed to all speculative innovations. The *Institutiones Theologicae* of Liebermann, the most famous work produced by the school, was admirably clear as a text-book, so that it rapidly came into use in many countries; but it was totally and deliberately void of all originality. If the school of Mayence had any sympathy at all with contemporary philosophy, it was with French Traditionalism, and not with *any* of the schools of German philosophy, Catholic or non-Catholic.

Shortly before Bautain sprang into prominence at Strasbourg, the surviving leaders of the school of Mayence, Liebermann and his pupil Raess, had been driven out of Germany by the hostility of the Hessian government, which had founded a rival, anti-papal faculty of Catholic theology at Giessen. Returning to Alsace they proceeded to imprint upon the instruction at the *Grand Séminaire* at Strasbourg and the *"Petite Sorbonne"*[86] at Molsheim the same rigid scholastic discipline which had characterized the instruction at Mayence. At the University of Strasbourg, the influence of Kantianism, Idealism, and Romanticism was all-controlling; in the Seminary at Strasbourg, mediaeval scholasticism reigned supreme. This is the situation which must be visualized if we are to understand the sudden popularity which Bautain achieved when he interpreted Catholicism to the Strasbourg youth in terms of Romanticism, and his sudden downfall when he attacked scholasticism and came into conflict with the *Grand Séminaire*.

[85] Vermeil, *op. cit.*, 120-125, 451-473, and *passim*.

[86] Raess became director of the School at Molsheim in 1830, and superior of the *Grand Séminaire* in 1831—just in time to make trouble for Bautain.

# CHAPTER I

## LOUIS BAUTAIN: THE ODYSSEY OF AN ARDENT SOUL

LOUIS-EUGÈNE-MARIE BAUTAIN was born at Paris on the seventeenth of February, 1796. He was brought up a good Catholic, and always retained a vivid memory of the pious old serving-maid who taught him to pray, the white-haired priest who heard his first confession, and his own ecstatic feelings on the occasion of his first communion.[1] Like many another youth of his generation, however, he was gradually weaned away from religion in the course of his education.

> Alas! [says Bautain] The fervor of that first communion cooled little by little, when the tumult of the senses began. . . . The coarse voice of my animal nature drowned out the soft voice of my spiritual nature; and, when Reason came upon the scene with its pretentions of judging everything and explaining everything, it did not fail to take the side of the flesh. . . . I passed over into the camp of philosophy to enjoy complete liberty; hitherto I had been a believer; now I took pride in becoming a freethinker.[2]

It was at the *École Normale*, where Bautain matriculated in 1813, that he came under influences that led him definitely "over into the camp of philosophy." His interests at first seem to have been literary rather than philosophical;[3] but there was at the *École Normale* a young instructor named Victor Cousin, just beginning his brilliant career as a teacher, and full of a magnetic enthusiasm that attracted all the students to his lectures. Foremost among the students who clustered about Cousin were two whose names afterwards became well-known in French philosophical circles:

[1] Bautain, *Les choses de l'autre monde: journal d'un philosophe*, 8-9. (Abbrev.: *Choses.)* De Régny certifies that this and many other passages of this partly fictitious work are really autobiographical.

[2] *Les choses de l'autre monde*, 9; quoted by de Régny, 13.

[3] This literary bent remained; he was always the orator and the stylist as well as the thinker. Witness his remarkable book on *L'Art de parler en public*, still used by many teachers of public speaking.

Jouffroy and Damiron. Bautain was their intimate friend; they went, says M. Campaux, by the name of "the three inseparables."[4] All three, it would seem, went through some such crisis of religious skepticism as that which Jouffroy experienced, and which he has described with bitter poignancy in "*Comment les dogmes finissent.*" From that time on, they looked to philosophy to fill the place left vacant by the destruction of religious faith, and pursued their philosophical studies with a truly religious passion.

We must not suppose that Bautain, in ceasing to be a Catholic, became either an ethical individualist or a materialist in metaphysics. Such views were not likely to develop under the teaching of Cousin. We may, as a matter of fact, form a very exact notion of his youthful philosophical tendencies from his thesis for the degree of *Agrégé* in Philosophy, defended in August, 1816, and still preserved in the files of the *École Normale*. It is entitled *De idealismo et phaenomenismo, in eo quod pertinet ad existentiam substantiae spiritualis*, and aims to prove that the Lockian and Kantian epistemologies both lead inevitably to skepticism concerning not only the existence of an external world, but the existence of the Self as well—a skepticism from which there is no escape save through some such doctrine of common-sense knowledge, intuition, or "faith," as was then taught in Scotland by Reid and Stewart, and in Germany by Merian and Ancillon.[5] Bautain supports his contention with a painstaking review of English philosophy from Locke to Dugald Stewart, and German philosophy from Kant through Fichte, Schelling, and the Berlin Academists, in their bearing upon the problem of the existence of the Self—a very good piece of work for a youth of twenty. There is, of course, little originality or spontaneity in a dissertation of this sort; and, in the main, it serves only to show us how completely

[4] This friendship was never entirely broken, though Bautain's conversion naturally established a barrier. I find in a report of one of Bautain's sermons in the *Univers Religieux* for Apr. 29, 1840, the information that "MM. Jouffroy, Damiron, and other notables, political and scientific, were observed in the audience." The fictitious philosopher whose gradual conversion to Catholicism is traced in the *Choses de l'autre monde* (Bautain's last work) is undoubtedly meant to be Damiron. Evidently Bautain never ceased to hope that his old friends might be won over to the Catholic faith.

[5] Followers of Jacobi and the Berlin Academy. See Erdmann, *Gesch. der Phil.*, Index.

the Scottish realism of Reid and Stewart, lately introduced into France by Royer-Collard, had come to dominate the *École Normale*. At the very end, however, there creeps in a note of dissatisfaction, indicating a craving for a more daringly speculative metaphysic than the Scottish method of exact psychological observation made possible:

> But this observation, so laborious and so difficult—what does it reveal to us? Judgments, notions, opinions of our mind, natural prejudices whereby we are compelled to believe in the existence of that which we cannot see. I certainly know that I exist. But who am I? What is my nature? What is my origin? For what purpose was I born? Whence came I; where am I; whither am I being whirled away? Experience has no answer to these questions, which nevertheless incessantly tempt and trouble the human mind. . . . Before us, as we are admitted to the world of the unseen, no torch is glowing but the dim torch of reason; we walk along a steep and slippery path. Most often we are ready to fall with weariness, and yet we are never satisfied; often we are driven to despair, but never to boredom.—Despair is, in fact, the only repose of the metaphysician.—Yet if some flickering light shows itself in the distance, we rise up and press on again in that quest which is imposed upon us by the human nature of the human mind, which always tries to bring its knowledge up to the level of its faith. Strange indeed is the condition of men, who forever seek to know what it is not given them to know, and who have the firmest faith in those things of which they are necessarily ignorant. (*Pars seconda*, peroration.)

There is something more than florid rhetoric here; there is an *angoisse métaphysique*, a quenchless thirst for ultimates and absolutes, with which only certain religious souls are tormented. Hapless youth, to have turned to philosophy to slake such a thirst! Can we not already foresee the issue of his impassioned quest for Truth? Obviously, the Scottish philosophy, with its cautious affirmation of belief in a Self and in an external world, will not long content him. He will have certitude concerning the ultimate mysteries of existence—a certitude as immediate and irresistible as that which assures him of his own existence. And if the Scottish philosophers are right in saying that so elementary a fact as his own existence can in no wise be established by reason, but only by an exercise of faith—what then? For some men, the conclusion would be that, in ultimate questions of metaphysics, we must be content with

probabilities, and so, why rack our brains over essentially insoluble problems? For certain sensitive minds, however, these ultimate problems are the all-important ones, and uncertainty with respect to them is simply unbearable. What happens in such a mind when, weary with fruitless searching, it permits itself to dwell on the Church of Rome and her claim of absolute certitude, we know from Newman's *Apologia.* So it was to be with Bautain. For a little while he was to hold aloft the "dim torch of reason," and persevere in his hopeless endeavor to find religious certainty by the methods of philosophy; eventually he would be glad enough to take up again the torch of faith which he had flung down.

On his graduation from the *École Normale,* Bautain was at once appointed to teach philosophy at the *Collège Royal,* Strasbourg, where he took up his duties in October, 1816. His success as a teacher was such that he was invited a year later—at the ripe age of twenty-one!—to conduct a course in philosophy at the University. "From the very start," says M. Campaux, "he acquitted himself with honor, and obtained at once such a success with the youth of Strasbourg as was hitherto unheard-of. All those who heard him were carried away, and rivalled each other in pressing around the desk of the young orator." With his "piercing and powerful glance, giving a remarkable impression of resolution and will, something at once imposing and attractive," he combined a fluency of diction and a facility in the exposition of the most abstruse ideas which quite enthralled his auditors. "Good fortune brings responsibilities, as he knew; and he used to prepare each of his lectures as a general prepares his manoeuvres on the eve of a battle. He gave back to the public in zeal, in work, in pains, all that the public gave him in the shape of attention, friendliness, and favor."[6]

Victor Cousin was of course delighted at the brilliant opening of his young *protégé's* career, and, recognizing in him a capacity for systematic speculation lacking in himself, looked upon him as one of the most promising of the future leaders of the Eclectic school. After Bautain's first year of teaching at the University, Cousin invited him to spend the vacation with him, touring in

[6] Campaux, I, quoted by de Régny, 11, 12, 14.

Germany and interviewing the leading philosophers. Hegel, whom they met on this tour, is said to have remarked brusquely to Cousin, as the visitors were departing, "Monsieur, give up the thought of creating a system; leave that task to your young friend."[7]

Contact with German thought introduced a new phase in Bautain's philosophical development, as it did in Cousin's. He took up the study of the post-Kantian Idealists with new interest and respect. Fichte's works fascinated him; they turned his attention to ethical and political questions, and made him more of a liberal and a free-thinker than ever before. On his return from Germany, he undertook to give a course in *Morale transcendentale*, based squarely upon Fichte's *Sittenlehre*. We are indebted to Charles Boersch, editor of the *Revue d'Alsace*, for a summary of the views expressed by Bautain in this course.[8] I quote at some length; for it was in conscious opposition to this philosophy of liberty, reason, and "absolute spontaneity," that his own system later took shape, after his conversion to Catholicism. It is impossible to understand the Catholic phase of his intellectual evolution except in contrast with this brief but enthusiastic Fichtean phase.

M. Bautain [writes Boersch] then became in his lectures the reflection of the political passions which were agitating France. Bolder than M. Cousin, he did not stop at Kant, or at the Constituant Assembly and its hopes of reform. He identified himself with Fichte, with the wild and inexorable genius of the Convention; he lifted up the will upon a pedestal: he became . . . the apostle of the human will, in which he saw, like Fichte, the source of all dignity and all moral grandeur; he made it man's glory to accept no yoke, to put into all his acts that independence of the will which ought to rule his thoughts.

It is this independence of the will, M. Bautain then used to say, which makes the moral goodness of an action. . . . Pure liberty is thus the goal of all human life. This liberty is an ideal revealed by the reason. It is a transcendental idea which has not its type in the phenomenal world; for without us, we meet only necessity, and within us, we find only a will subjected by its present state to the influence of a hostile

[7] *Laissez ce soin à votre jeune homme.* Quoted on the authority of the Abbé Walther by Campaux, II, 41.

[8] *Revue d'Alsace, 2me Série,* I, 339 *et seq. (année* 1837). Boersch expresses his regret at Bautain's subsequent recantation of these views, and accuses him—most unjustly—of trimming his sails to the political winds. Boersch, who was himself a political radical, may perhaps exaggerate slightly the revolutionary implications of Bautain's ethical teachings.

Nature, and free only in certain moments. It is to realize this ideal that man should continually strain on, and thus the whole of moral science is contained in these words: *Man, act in conformity with thy reason, which reveals to thee thy liberty*; or, in other words, *Man, work out thy liberty, make thyself free. . . .*[9]

The psychology of M. Bautain was then in perfect harmony with his ethics. . . . The will found its law in itself, in itself alone: the reason in its turn ought to be an autonomous power, the fairest apanage of man; it too ought to serve as pivot for all psychology, as the will served as pivot for ethics. . . . The reason, M. Bautain used to say, in its strict acceptance, does not signify the sum of the intellectual faculties; neither is it reasoning or the faculty of deducing or inducing: it is the power by which man's mind communicates with Being; that is, with what is in itself, with the Absolute.[10]

A great, a noble apanage did M. Bautain then see in the human reason! Brilliant its privilege: to commune with the Absolute, to see God face to face, to contemplate him in his essence, to comprehend him by its own force, its own capacity, without any superior direct revelation, without incarnation. And what need had it of religious authority, . . . since itself had grandeur enough, divine elements enough, to raise itself to God, creative power enough to reveal to man the ideal of liberty?

That was a period of greatness and enthusiasm for M. Bautain. It was a noble mission which he accomplished, to awaken in men's souls the feeling of independence, to inspire the youth with that consciousness of human dignity, and the power of the will, which makes them conceive great designs and accomplish great tasks. Surrounded by the sympathy of a numerous audience, he reflected in his doctrines the popular tendency of the epoch; he was the philosophical mouth-piece of that movement of reaction against the Restoration, and his teaching was a battering-ram which was beating a breach in the still unsteady power of the Bourbons.

Boersch's report of Bautain's liberal tendencies at this period is confirmed by a quotation—probably from this same course in *Transcendental Ethics*, though misdated 1820—which is preserved in the Archives of the Bishopric of Strasbourg among the papers collected by Bautain's enemies:

There are in the nation two powers, one absolute and one relative. The first is the reason, the second is the will. The nation is its own sovereign when . . . the executive function *(force public)* is exercised only in the direction dictated by reason. . . . But when it no longer follows reason, when it tends to impair liberty, obedience is no longer

[9] *Leçons dictées de philosophie morale, §§ 25 et 26. Année 1818.*

[10] *Ibid.*, § 28.

obligatory, for it is obligatory only towards legitimate authority, that is, towards that which is in conformity with reason.[11]

The corollaries of this are said to be "the inviolability of individual liberty," including liberty "of property, of thought, of industry, of opinion and of conscience," and the "equality of the members" of society. The extract closes with quotations from Plato, Cicero, and other "old revolutionaries." The copyist adds that he was credibly informed by M. G——, who sent him the quotation, that it was for these opinions that Bautain was suspended from his functions in 1822, by order of the government—although, as we shall see, other reasons for the suspension were alleged at the time.

We cannot be sure as to Bautain's attitude toward the Church at this period; but it seems probable that he was in a state of complete alienation from her authority and from most of her teachings. When he was graduated from normal school, he must still have felt certain recurrent regrets at having lost the maternal guidance of the Church in matters of opinion, for he had none too much confidence in the "dim torch" of the human reason, to whose guidance he had so lately entrusted himself; but now that German Idealism had removed his agnosticism by teaching him to see in the reason a transcendental faculty, capable of piercing to the core of all life's ultimate mysteries, he definitely turned his back on the Church, cast away religious faith as a useless crutch, and, rejoicing with all the exuberance of youth in his new-found freedom, set out to solve the riddle of the universe alone. May we not see a reflection of Bautain's own views at this stage in his development in those which he ascribes to his fictitious philosopher in the *Choses de l'autre monde?* Speaking of religion, he says:

> It was a realm apart where there was nothing of interest to us, in the first place because, in it, reason was dominated by faith and did not enjoy its right of liberty, and in the second place because the intuition

[11] FB,B1. The letters FB *(Fonds Bautain)* refer to Bautain's manuscript remains, as catalogued by Professor Baudin. FB,A to FB,E will be found in the Archives of the Bishopric of Strasbourg. FB,H to FB,Q will be found in the library of the *Collège de Juilly*, near Meaux. FB,U and FB,V1 to V10 (the most important Ms. courses) belong to the *Congrégation des Dames de St.-Louis*, at Juilly.

of the idea of the Absolute lifted us far above the obscurity of belief, useful only to those who were incapable of climbing the heights of knowledge . . . faith keeping them in a perpetual state of tutelage, in a sort of childhood. I continued in that attitude for a number of years, filled with the importance and superiority of the sort of caste to which I belonged, and working day and night to render myself worthy of it. . . .[12]

This Promethean phase in Bautain's development was destined to be of short duration. In March, 1819, while still engaged in lecturing upon *Transcendental Ethics*, he met with a sudden interruption in his brilliant career. Intoxicated with his success, stimulated by the plaudits of his auditors, he had given himself feverishly to the work of preparing his lectures and perfecting their literary form. To penetrate ever more deeply into the thought of the German philosophers whom he had taken as his masters, and then to explain and illustrate their ideas with French lucidity, involved a good deal of mental strain, which eventually undermined his health. One day, in the very midst of a lecture, his mind suddenly became a blank; and after attempting vainly to pick up the thread of his discourse, he was forced to stammer an apology and leave the room. For months afterward, he remained in a state of nervous exhaustion, a prey to melancholia. In October, he attempted to resume his lectures, but broke down again after a month. Plagued with indigestion and insomnia, dragging himself feebly along like an old man, he was a pathetic figure. His mental state became desperate; let him describe it himself:

Unable to work any more, incapable of thinking and consequently of talking, falling back at the least effort upon himself, in whom he now found only impotence and vacancy, having no longer the plaudits of men and the clamor of popularity to sustain him, he felt himself fainting in body and soul . . . he thought that his life on earth was at an end, and he had the criminal thought of breaking off its thread. Poor philosopher! For, as you see, all his learning had not taught him how to endure sickness, or misfortune; and, in his youthful pride, he imagined he had nothing more to do here below, since he could no longer shine! Poor philosopher, who arrogated to himself the right of destroying his existence, as if he were the author of it, or as if he were responsible to no one for the post at which he had been placed! But the characteristic

[12] *Op. cit.*, 9-10.

of all non-Christian philosophy is the pretention to autonomy, to independence; and at that time I considered myself a philosopher and was not a Christian.[13]

It is quite possible that Bautain's career might indeed have ended in suicide, if he had not chanced to meet at Baden, where he had gone for his health in the summer of 1820, a remarkable woman who was to exercise a decisive influence upon all the rest of his life: Louise Humann, sister of Georges Humann, and niece of the celebrated Mgr. Colmar, Archbishop of Mayence.

Mlle. Humann was already known to Bautain by reputation, as a woman who presented a most extraordinary combination of devoutness and learning. Under her uncle's tuition, she had cultivated the most various types of science, from philology to experimental chemistry; but she had made a special study of the contemporary German philosophers, whose works she had analyzed and criticized with care, in little note-books intended only for her own perusal. She was, in short, as Eugene Baudin puts it, "an Alsatian Mme. de Staël."[14]

It was Mlle. Humann's knowledge of German philosophy which first attracted Bautain to her—that, and that alone. Feminine charm she had none; she was then fifty-four, and had never been good-looking.[15] Even her reputation for erudition was a questionable asset; Bautain expected, as he says, to find her "a sort of *bas-bleu*," and was in no wise pleased at the prospect. But the woman to whom he was introduced turned out to be "a very simple person, very dignified in her manners, talking but little, always calmly, without any pretentiousness but with much sense and precision"; and when the conversation drifted to German philosophy, Bautain was ready to admit that he had met his equal.

> The fact is . . . [says Bautain] that I had never met any woman or any person who talked upon it more pertinently or more clearly. . . . She had come in touch with the principal writers of that period, or had

[13] De Régny, 17-18. This and the following quotations dealing with Bautain's conversion are all drawn from Bautain's own most interesting account of his conversion, in *La Chrétienne de nos jours*, Vol. II, Letter 15. Since de Régny quotes practically the entire letter, I refer, for convenience, to his citations instead of to the original source.

[14] *Louis Bautain, le philosophe de Strasbourg*, 8. (Abbrev., Baudin, I.)

[15] Her portrait is reproduced in *Une Française d'Alsace: Mlle. Louise Humann*, by Fliche, 2nd ed., 1921.

read their works—and not superficially, as women usually read, and even many men, but with pen in hand to itemize their thoughts and if need be to develop and rectify them. . . . It was a treasure I had discovered; and I was all the more pleased at it because the last straw that completed the ruination of my health had been the study of this philosophy in the original texts, which I had great difficulty in understanding. I could no longer read, but I could listen, and I found a living book, which gave me the *résumé* of many others, with the added advantage of the clearness of the French tongue and the charm of a friendly voice.[16]

The acquaintance thus begun in Baden was renewed in Strasbourg. Mlle. Humann had just recently returned to the city of her birth, after spending many years in Mayence with Mgr. Colmar. The death of her tutor and friend and spiritual guide had now cast her adrift, at a time of life when it is hard to form new attachments and take up new tasks. Lonely, hungering for intellectual companionship, feeling a bitter sense of her uselessness and longing for some mission to fulfil, she found a veritable answer to prayer in the opportunity to mother and befriend—and, *qui sait?* perhaps convert—the unhappy young philosopher. As for Bautain, the conversations which he had at Mlle. Humann's each evening gave him a new interest in life, and literally restored him to health. In less time than one would have believed possible, Bautain was lecturing again at the University, guided in his reading, and more and more in his thinking, by Mlle. Humann.

The course of lectures which Bautain first undertook was on a new subject for him: Aesthetics. The truth is, he was too unsettled in his thinking to undertake to lecture on Ethics or Metaphysics. His former philosophy had definitively gone by the board; it had failed to give him any help in his hour of need, and, to him, that was the most convincing proof of its falsity. To Bautain, philosophy always meant philosophy of life. No longer could he exalt the powers of the human reason, the autonomy of the will, and the rights of the individual: the nightmare of melancholia had destroyed his confidence in the natural capacities of man; and, if he was in the future to find anything on which to base his thinking and rest his confidence, it must be something surer than his own uncertain reason, something steadier than his own wavering will.

[16] De Régny, 53-54.

He was probably wholly in the dark as to what the new basis of his philosophy was to be. Some time during this crucial year he must have returned from the study of the post-Kantian idealists to the study of Kant himself; for all his subsequent writings take the main results of the *Kritik der Reinen Vernunft* for granted, as final and unimpeachable. That the human reason is metaphysically impotent, that it is incapable of acquiring, by its own powers, any valid knowledge of things-in-themselves, of ultimate realities —this proposition became henceforth the cornerstone of all his thinking. This implies not only the rejection of speculative idealism, with its easy identification of the real and the rational, but also the rejection of the scholastic philosophy, with its rationalistic arguments for the existence of God and the truth of Christianity. If the ultimate mysteries of life can be penetrated at all—such seems to have been the conclusion to which he came at this time—it must be by some faculty other than the reason. Whether there existed such a faculty, he may well have doubted, for a while. He was always of the opinion that the *Kritik der Praktischen Vernunft* was a clumsy and unsuccessful attempt to repair the damage done by the *Kritik der Reinen Vernunft;* the upshot of the Critical Philosophy was absolute skepticism: ultimate reality was unknowable.[17] Whether Bautain actually became for a time a complete skeptic—a terrible *cul-de-sac* for a man with his hunger for ultimates and absolutes—or whether he began to glimpse the solution as soon as he fully perceived the difficulty, we do not know. We know only that he went through a severe mental struggle, from which he emerged—thanks to Mlle. Humann—a firm believer in the doctrines of the Catholic faith.

For some time Bautain, too proud to burden another with his woes, tried to conceal his philosophical difficulties from his friend; but at length, during a sudden fit of mental depression, he made a clean breast to her of all his mental misgivings, and all his physical distress, as well. He confessed that his lonely life was becoming unbearable to him; she invited him to take all his meals at her house, and treated him thenceforth as a member of the family. From this time on, their conversations turned more and

[17] See the answer to the fourth charge (the charge of being a Kantian) in Bautain's *Lettre à Mgr. Lepappe de Trévern, évêque de Strasbourg.*

more upon religious themes; and Bautain found, to his surprise, that, quite without argumentation, simply by the naïve and modest expression of her religious intuitions, Mlle. Humann was able to suggest solutions to problems which had tormented him all his life.

> Even today [writes Bautain] after all these years, I cannot wonder enough at the gentleness with which she put up with my youthful impatience and my philosophical sallies, letting me speak at my leisure, and then taking up the question in her own fashion. . . . Her gentleness, which never contradicted me directly, but which regained all its advantages when it came her turn to expound, had much more influence over my mind than all the argumentations of controversy; and when, having spoken at length, I listened in my turn, I almost always ended, sometimes without realizing it, by being of her opinion. . . . So, when I had worked off my youthful fire and emptied my philosophical sack—which was very soon—I came to listen more than I talked; and, almost without noticing it, the professor became the disciple.[18]

It was not long before Bautain's philosophical scorn of religious dogmas—which he had long regarded as mere "sensible forms or degenerate symbols of absolute truth"[19]—began to melt away. As Mlle. Humann talked, and as he read the Scriptures under her guidance,

> I soon acquired the conviction [he says] through the insight of my intelligence, through the clear ideas of my mind, through a loftier contemplation of Nature, which appeared to me like the glorious symbol of a higher world; through the simpler and more satisfying explanation of the great problems of human life, to which I saw no solution until then . . . I acquired the conviction, I say, that Christian doctrine is philosophy's crown, or, if you will, her last word. . . . How I had been led to this conviction, in truth, I could not tell in detail. But at any rate I had arrived there . . . led by the luminous and affectionate words of my good angel, who, without ever imposing anything upon me . . . simply answered my needs as fast as they made themselves manifest. . . . Never was a man's liberty more fully respected, and never, too, was it more fully conquered.[20]

From theory to practice was another long step. Bautain realized perfectly well that the Christian philosophy he had adopted

[18] De Régny, 59.
[19] *Ibid.*, 58.
[20] *Ibid.*, 60-61.

"was not a philosophy like any other, and that no progress is to be made in it unless deeds are joined to ideas to realize and confirm them." Nevertheless, he found prayer and confession bitter pills for his pride to swallow; and at least once broke into open revolt as he felt the net of ecclesiastical control closing about him. Mlle. Humann's tact saw him through every crisis.

It was Bautain's first prayer that marked the most decisive step of all. He was disposed to dispute the efficacy and utility of prayer. She refused to discuss the matter with him, smilingly reminding him that he was a philosopher, and would be sure to worst her in an argument. Prayer *was* efficacious; she affirmed that on the basis of her own experience, which was perhaps a bit of evidence deserving to be weighed—but he was not far enough advanced for the subject of prayer to open up properly for him, as yet.

> Her patience disconcerted me [says Bautain]; . . . by the strange contradictory tendency of our nature, I began to desire what she would not explain to me—still less impose upon me—and I was impelled to try it just because I was thought incapable of it. That very evening, I searched my memory for the prayers of my childhood . . . and . . . after saying a *Pater* and an *Ave*, I invoked the Unknown God, like the Athenians in St. Paul's day, asking him with all my heart for his light, that I might know him, and his grace, that I might love and serve him. The next day, I returned triumphant to madame Louise,[21] telling her that I had prayed, and that the feeling of peace and trust it had left with me had persuaded me that prayer was good for something. Since that moment, I have not left off.[22]

This crucial step taken, it was henceforth impossible for Bautain to turn back; logic and conscience both urged him on. Mlle. Humann did not press him; "God has his good time," she would say. Almost two years elapsed between Bautain's first meeting with her and the event which definitely marked his conversion to the Catholic faith: his first confession, made to a venerable priest at Einsiedeln.

The circumstances of this conversion—the total lack of argumentation, the large rôle played by vague intuitions and unconscious

[21] A pseudonym for Mlle. Humann, whose identity Bautain does not reveal in the account from which we have been quoting.

[22] De Régny, 64-65.

personal influence, the impossibility of summing up in any distinct chain of reasoning the startling change of convictions which he experienced—these circumstances powerfully influenced Bautain's whole theory of the nature of religious truth, and of the proper relations of reason and faith in Christian apologetics. They serve to "explain up to a certain point" (as de Régny justly remarks) "the repugnance which M. Bautain henceforth showed for purely rational proofs of the truth."[23] Thus, at least indirectly, through her part in Bautain's conversion, Mlle. Humann may be said to have exercised a controlling influence over all his subsequent thinking. But her influence was also direct; she was a philosopher as well as a Christian, and changed the current of his thinking as decisively as she changed the current of his life. If we are to understand his philosophical evolution, we must know something of the philosophical tendencies which she represented.

One would like to know the ideas of this singular woman more in detail. Unfortunately, she had a firm conviction that a woman should never publish a book, and ordered all her manuscripts to be burned when she died. Only a few scattered fragments of her writings survive. These few are sufficient, however, to reveal the main tendencies of her thinking.

First of all, it is clear that she was a mystic—not merely a theoretical mystic, like Plotinus, convinced of the superiority of intuition to discursive reason, but a practical mystic, like St. Theresa, convinced that she was herself in frequent and immediate touch with the divine. "Monseigneur Colmar," we are told, "thought he discerned in her a soul illumined by a supernatural light, and was therefore wont to take her advice in every serious crisis."[24] That she was herself confident of her powers is evident from the following phrases which occur in her diary:

. . . the beams of light which He sends me almost daily like my daily bread. . . .

. . . pour into me Thy light in proportion as Thou shalt render me susceptible to it, and let me make it my own only in so far as it shall be needful to those to whom Thou shalt desire to communicate it by my instrumentality. . . .

[23] *Ibid.*, 70.

[24] *Ibid.*, 49, note 1.

Nature has lifted her veil, and has showed herself in her simplicity to my eyes. . . .

To-day I tore up a lot more of my papers, and I was strongly tempted to burn them all, to confine myself henceforth to whatever the light from on high shall deign to communicate to me immediately. . . .[25]

It is in the light of her mysticism that Mlle. Humann's criticism of the contemporary German philosophers is to be appreciated—

these system-builders, these modern masters of philosophy, who attempt to build a science with what they call their *chiaroscuro*, that is, their natural light. . . . They talk of man, pretending to talk of him as psychologists, and they know neither the origin, nor the necessary law, nor the end of man. *They talk of God, and perhaps they have never opened their souls to receive and taste his divine activity; they know not what it is to love Him;* it is with difficulty that they believe He exists; . . . they do not suspect that religion is divine and as ancient as the world, since it is the bond which unites man to God, the living *rapport* between God and man. And how should they understand anything about this *rapport* since they know neither God nor man?[26]

I have italicized the key-sentence. It is evident that, for Mlle. Humann, as for all the Christian mystics, the knowledge of ultimate reality is impossible without the immediate *experience* of Ultimate Reality—an experience that is not merely intellectual, but emotional and moral as well, and an experience attainable only by the pure and the humbly receptive soul. This principle of Mlle. Humann's became a cornerstone of the philosophy of her disciple.

Another *leit-motiv* in Bautain's philosophy which we find also in Mlle. Humann's, is the rule of spiritual law in the natural world:

It is impossible [she writes] to make a serious study of natural objects, and of the physical world and its laws, without discovering at every moment wonderful analogies between this world and the sacred Truths which Religion teaches.[27]

This is not nature-mysticism in the Wordsworthian sense. Nature is not the garment of God; it is a sphere of corruption and un-

[25] Fliche, *Mlle. Louise Humann*, 76-78.
[26] *Ibid.*, 127-128.
[27] *Ibid.*, 126.

reality, by comparison with the realm of pure and changeless Being from which it fell.

> The Christian [writes Mlle. Humann] who believes with greater certainty and confidence in things invisible than in those which fall within the domain of the senses . . . sees in Nature only a restless agent which makes and unmakes, which produces and destroys, and in the world only a passing show, wherein there is nothing stable and permanent, nothing true and subsistent except the pure light and life which are of God.[28]

It is clear from these passages, and others like them, that the general stream of thought with which Mlle. Humann brought Bautain in contact was the ancient tradition of Christian mysticism, which goes back through Boehme, Eckhart, and Scotus Erigena to pseudo-Dionysius and the Alexandrian fathers—and through them, finally, to Philo and the Platonic tradition. Mingled with theosophic, occultistic, and Cabalistic tendencies, this ancient mystical tradition was just then exerting a most powerful influence upon all the philosophers of France and Germany. It was mediated partly by the philosophy of Jacob Boehme, which enjoyed an unheard-of popularity throughout the epoch of Romanticism, and partly by more classical sources such as neo-Platonism. Sound deeply enough in the philosophy of Fichte, Schelling, Schleiermacher, or even Hegel, and you will strike mysticism; but far more mystical than the philosophy of such men was the popular philosophy of the day—and it was from this secondary stratum, I should say, the stratum represented by men like Jacobi in Protestant circles and men like Franz Baader in Catholic circles, that Mlle. Humann drew her leading ideas.

I mention Jacobi and Baader because their influence upon Bautain (*via* Mlle. Humann) is clear and undeniable. From Jacobi must have come Bautain's conception of faith as a cognitive faculty; from Baader, his conception of the analogy between cognition and biological reproduction. But Jacobi and Baader were representatives of a very wide-spread movement of thought. In an article on Baader in the *Revue Européenne* at about this time,[29] the remark is made that Baader's theory of certitude "is at the same

[28] *Ibid.*, 128-129.

[29] *Revue Européenne*, I, 298, *et seq.*

time that of almost all the Catholic savants of Germany"; while Baron Bunsen, in a letter preserved in the *Fonds Bautain*, observes that Bautain's anti-intellectualism is "almost general in our German schools, especially that of Schelling and that of Baader."[30] An investigation of this whole movement of thought[31] would cast much light upon the unavowed presuppositions of German idealism.

But to return to the story of Bautain's development—the years 1820 to 1822, as we have seen, witnessed a gradual change in his whole intellectual and moral attitude. It is interesting to trace the steps in this change. First of all, when still unconverted, he undertook, at Mlle. Humann's suggestion, to make a French translation of Krummacher's *Parables*,[32] a children's book in which analogies between natural phenomena and religious ideas are poetically traced. Next, we find him exchanging his course on Aesthetics, at Easter, 1821, for a course in Psychology, "whose principal data," as de Régny informs us, "were suggested by Mlle. Humann." Then, for the academic year 1821-22, he boldly chose Metaphysics for his field; and his auditors were soon aware that a radical change had taken place in his point of view.

Discussion over this course became quite hot. The political radicals and the rationalists were scandalized to find him exalting duty and faith in place of liberty and reason; the Protestants at once detected a Catholic drift; the Catholics themselves were a bit alarmed at the violence of his attacks upon the reason, which savored of skepticism. Slanderous tongues, as M. Campaux reports,[33] proceeded to garble the professor's teachings: he had said, "God does not exist; he *is*"; and his critics, suppressing the second half of the sentence, loudly accused him of atheism. Bautain meanwhile went his way, calm in his new-found faith. Seeking

[30] FB,K, *Cahier* I, 11-12. That Baader's opinions were well known to Bautain is proved by the following remark in a letter to Prince Mestchersky (FB,K, *Cahier* II, 17): "I think him sincerely Christian at heart, but perhaps too much carried away with the ideas of Saint-Martin and of Jacob Boehme. He would have much more influence if he wrote more clearly. But his style is *désolant*." A series of articles by and about Baader was running in the *Revue Européenne* (Vols. I, II, III, & IX) concurrently with Bautain's first articles.

[31] A very good brief sketch of this movement of thought is to be found in the introduction to Vermeil's *J. A. Moehler et l'école catholique de Tubingue*, Paris, 1913.

[32] Published 1821; ran through 7 editions; later editions contained additional parables by Bautain.

[33] See de Régny, 75-76.

to enrich his store of empirical data, and to find new evidences of spiritual law in the natural world, he entered the medical school at Easter, 1822, while still continuing to teach at the University and the *Collège Royal.*

Toward the end of the academic year, the much-discussed course in Metaphysics was suddenly interrupted. M. Budan de Saint-Laurent, inspector general of the University, was sent from Paris by the Government to investigate Bautain's teaching. After listening to one of Bautain's lectures, he caused a sensation among the auditors by rising in his place and publicly denouncing the professor, on the ground that in maintaining the impotence of the reason he was undermining religion and morals. Later in the summer—just after making the general confession which completed his union with the Catholic Church—Bautain received word that he had been suspended from his functions in consequence of his irreligious teaching! "Certainly," says Baudin, "the suspicious Restoration displayed in this instance as clumsy and maladroit a hand as one might wish. In striking simultaneously at Bautain and at his friends, Jouffroy and Damiron, it was making martyrs for Eclecticism; and to cap the climax, it was reckoning among its adherents the philosopher who was getting ready to combat it."[34] It seems likely that the alleged reason for Bautain's suspension was only a pretext; his real offense lay in his former championship of liberty and equality.

Bautain's suspension was the occasion of a letter to the Rector of the Academy, in which he reaffirmed the main teachings of his Metaphysics course,[35] defending himself against the charge of skepticism and urging that it was unbelievers and Protestants who had most reason to take umbrage at his teachings. In this letter, the outline of his whole system already appears; one may confidently say that, at this early date, July 1, 1822, not two years after his meeting with Mlle. Humann, his intellectual evolution was complete, and his philosophical system was already conceived in its definitive form, which not even the violence of ecclesiastical controversy was ever able seriously to alter. Certain passages in this letter form an almost indispensable introduction to his philosophy.

[34] Baudin, I.

[35] The syllabus of this course has been preserved in Ms. (FB,V1). It is the chief source for Bautain's Metaphysics.

"My teaching," says Bautain,[36] "whose form may appear novel, is simply *Platonism* purified by the light of *Christianity*." Its novel form is chiefly due to the fact that there are two well-marked tendencies among his auditors, with which he has constantly to reckon: *Kantianism* and *Protestantism*.

> The system of Kant [he says] has brought back many minds from gross materialism, not to faith or revelation, but to the conviction that reason could know nothing above the world of the senses, and to the despair of ever lifting themselves by its aid into the higher world. That is the upshot of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*. His *antinomies* or contradictory arguments prove in a very powerful fashion that the human reason can demonstrate the *pro* and *con* with equal success so far as ultimate questions are concerned; . . . that there is therefore no sufficient reason, no solid ground, either for affirming or for denying that which cannot be perceived by the senses; and that thus indifferentism in things metaphysical and divine is the part of the sage.
>
> This decision of the *Critical Philosophy* puts an end to all dispute; but its consequence is that he who talks of invisible and supernatural things can be only a dreamer, since he occupies himself with objects imperceptible to the senses and undemonstrable by the reason, or else an *esprit faible*, a partisan of obscurantism, floundering to no purpose in the darkness of faith.[37]

Combine with this critical tendency the Protestant tendency, to rationalize the dogmas of religion, and one may imagine, says Bautain, the difficulty of talking at all to such an audience upon the subject of Metaphysics—"that is to say, concerning objects which cannot be perceived by the senses, and which nevertheless are the basis and reason of all that exists." However, he determined to attack his subject, and to do it in such a fashion as to show its vital human importance, being convinced from experience that the discussion "of the possible and the impossible, of the necessary and the contingent, . . . of cause and effect," and suchlike abstractions, is perfectly fruitless, if not worse than fruitless, where matters of such high import are concerned. "What good is learning, if it does not make better men!"[38]

The truth which makes better men is found most clearly in the Gospels; but of course the direct exposition of Gospel truth

[36] *Fonds Bautain*, U13.
[37] FB,U2.
[38] *Ibid.*, 3.

would hardly be classed as philosophy, "since this word signifies in our day something quite different from *the love of wisdom.*"

> I therefore [says Bautain] announced Plato as my chosen master; I expounded his teaching, as far as I could, in terms of the pure forms of mathematics; I made the light of the Gospel dominate the spirit and form of my course, and, without my speaking positively of the fundamental dogmas of Christianity, they became evident through the facts of Nature and its laws.[39]

Christian in spirit and purpose, Platonic in its positive teachings, Kantian in its negative teachings—that is perhaps the simplest formula for Bautain's philosophy. We may well postpone our study of its positive and constructive side, since it never came under discussion during Bautain's lifetime, and, save by his close disciples, was never understood. Suffice it to say that the central principle of his constructive philosophy can be exactly defined in terms of his new attitude toward life. Before his conversion, he had been self-reliant, independent, a believer in the absolute spontaneity of the human will and reason; now he was humble, respectful to tradition and authority, conscious of his dependence upon powers outside of himself for guidance and enlightenment, and for life itself. He justifies this new attitude of his—surely a typically Catholic attitude—by adducing facts from every realm of nature and from the moral life of man to prove that passivity, receptivity, submissiveness, dependence, are everywhere the necessary conditions for the healthy growth of all finite creatures, and for the attainment of such limited freedom, spontaneity, and intelligence as is within the reach of man. But we cannot postpone altogether our discussion of the negative, Kantian, anti-intellectualistic side of Bautain's philosophy; for all the outstanding events in his career, from now on, hinge upon it in one way or another.

As we have seen, Bautain accepts Kant's verdict, that the human reason is incapable of attaining to the knowledge of metaphysical ultimates. He goes farther: he applies this general verdict to the specific case of the traditional rational arguments for the existence of God, and, like Kant, pronounces them all invalid.

[39] *Ibid.*, 4.

God, I told them, cannot be demonstrated by the reason; for there are but three ways of demonstrating a truth: equation, deduction, and induction. By *equation* one determines an unknown term by a known term which is its equal, and to which one compares it. Well, "What is equal to God?" . . . With what term shall we compare Him who is above all terms? By *deduction*, one affirms the particular by showing it to be included in the general, in a higher term. What is that term which is higher than God? What shall be the premise of that deduction whose conclusion is to be God? By *induction* one forms the general out of the particular; but the general is not the universal, and one does not make the Infinite out of the finite. Now, God is the Universal, the Infinite, the Absolute. Can reason then conceive him and embrace Him? Show me a process of reasoning which does not come under one of these categories.[40]

It was quite natural, he admits, for the inspector-general to suppose that teaching of this sort tended to undermine religious faith. Seeing the rational proofs of the existence of God disputed, and supposing that religious faith was based upon these proofs, he was quite logically led to ask, in a tone of indignation, what a man in the grip of despair or of passion might not do, if these bases of the faith were removed. But to this question—so nearly touching his own case—Bautain has ready a vigorous reply:

I do not think that a passionate or wretched man can be calmed or consoled by arguments. Syllogisms have no power against the soul's distress and the heart's agitations. Something loftier and deeper is needed: faith in God, the feeling of His activity within us and His providence over us, surrender to the higher Will—none of them things that reasoning will ever give.[41]

The truth is that an altogether exaggerated importance has been ascribed to the traditional arguments for the existence of God. They are supposed to be convincing to unbelievers; whereas they never convince anybody who is not already convinced. Nay, more: it is possible to believe firmly in God while rejecting all rational arguments; and it is possible to lose all vital faith in God in the very act of proving His existence—or rather, the existence of a philosophical abstraction that goes by His name!

[40] FB,U8. [41] *Ibid.*, 9.

Yes, Monsieur, I have taught and I still teach that the human reason is not the judge of these things; that they are beyond its sphere and its range; that there is not a rational proof of the existence of God to which an equally cogent disproof cannot be opposed; and that all this polemic loads the mind without touching the heart, fills the memory without giving nourishment to the soul, makes man proud in his own conceit, and finally hardens him. When we speak of God, the question is not to prove that it is impossible He should not exist; the problem is to make men feel that He exists. . . . When a man knows God only through speculation, he becomes capable of disputing about God, but his will is not made better thereby.[42]

But if the knowledge of God (and other metaphysical ultimates) is not to be gained by reasoning, how *is* it to be gained? When we accept the negative verdict of the Critical Philosophy, are we not doomed to skepticism? No, says Bautain. The Critical Philosophy simply closes one possible road to the knowledge of God; it shows that by the path of reason neither proof nor disproof of His existence is to be found. What then? Having found that rational arguments cancel each other and give us a sum of zero, we have simply to abandon the path of reason and try another way of reaching our objective: the way of self-mortification, of faith, of feeling, of immediate insight.

First of all, *self-mortification*. There are certain moral qualifications for metaphysical research: "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." This truth is Platonic as well as Christian; Plato is at one with the Fathers in insisting upon ascetic purification as an essential part of the training of the philosopher.

Then, *faith*. Every science, remarks Bautain, is dogmatic at its point of departure; it takes all its fundamental concepts and first principles on faith. Hence metaphysics, the science of sciences, must also be dogmatic; it must postulate the existence of God, the Universal Being, or it will never get on, any more than logic would get on if the principles of rationality were called in question, or physics, if the existence of forces were to be denied.

None of these sciences demonstrates, nor *can* it demonstrate, the veridical nature of its object except by its evolution, progression, and development. Centre, unity, reason, force, are terms which represent the

[42] *Ibid.*, 6.

Idea of which the science and the doctrine are the development. No physics, no logic, no mathematics would be possible for one who refused to adhere to these names or terms. Similarly, no metaphysic is possible for one who refuses to recognize the name of Being, or the reality of His existence.[43]

Religious faith, however, is more than the provisional acceptance of terms, axioms, and postulates, to be tested by their "developments." It is a *feeling*, says Bautain, a feeling for the truth, a quivering of the heart at the dimly felt presence of a supersensible reality. Every man has among his innate tendencies the capacity to react with a specific emotional thrill when the idea of God is presented to his attention. If he is receptive, if he does not insulate himself from reality by exalting himself as an *autonomous* being, endowed with *absolute spontaneity*, then sooner or later, directly or indirectly, the divine presence will manifest itself to him, producing in him a feeling which is implicitly an act of cognition, a religious thrill which is at the same time nascent knowledge of God. It is usually human teaching, or the sight of the majesty of the visible world of Nature, which first awakens this feeling; but man and Nature only mediately reveal a Reality which may be immediately experienced. This is the "true demonstration" of the existence of God: "this demonstration of Himself which He makes by His action upon our hearts, and by the mediating action of Nature upon us."[44]

Finally, *insight*. If reason can tell us nothing about the supersensible world, if it can cognize only sensible things and relations between them, this does not mean that we can have no clear knowledge of ultimate realities. Blind faith and purblind feeling must be our guides at first; but for the pure in heart, faith always leads to sight at last, and the idea of God, conceived at the moment of the heart's first spontaneous reaction, unfolds into a veritable science of God. "*Taste*," says Bautain; "then only [will you] *see* how gracious the Lord is."[45] In other words, knowledge of God is possible, but only for religious souls, who are willing at first to take his existence on faith, as they take the existence of other minds.

[43] FB, U5.
[44] *Ibid.*, 7.
[45] *Ibid.*, 6.

Religious experience furnishes the indispensable data for religious knowledge.

I thought therefore [concludes Bautain] that in our day it was necessary to follow a different road, in order to give my young men a complete conviction of [the reality of] God. I spoke to their hearts more than to their reason. I did not prove God to them by arguments; but I made known His name to them, and I tried to reawaken their feelings. I showed them the divine activity working upon them from the moment of their birth, seeking to penetrate their heart. . . . I had the joy of seeing my words take effect, and the seed take root in the soil which has been allotted to me. Doubts were dissipated, and a sweet and simple faith scattered the clouds of reason.

My method seems to me, moreover, to be in harmony with religious teaching. We find in the Gospel neither system, nor theory, nor syllogism, nor argumentation. . . . We do not find that the apostles used syllogisms to support what they proclaimed. . . . The Spirit does not dispute, nor does it cry aloud in the streets and the market-places; it gently steals into men's souls like a soft breath. It is thus, also, that ministers of the Gospel teach God to the children. They are not plied with syllogisms and arguments; they would not be capable of understanding them—and nevertheless they feel God, they believe in Him, and the virtues proper to their age . . . prove the reality of their faith. It is possible then to believe in God without physical, moral, or metaphysical arguments.[46]

This letter, as we have said, marks the culmination of Bautain's intellectual evolution; all his fundamental ideas appear in it. It should be added, however, that they are not yet clearly formulated or widely applied. As Bautain would say, the Idea had not yet fully *evolved;* it remained in the realm of Metaphysics, and had not yet descended into the realms of Cosmology, Ethics, and Politics. In all these fields—not to speak of Logic, Biology, Psychology, Pedagogy, and Philology (!)—it was to *manifest itself* during the next few years.

We are in fact approaching the most fruitful period in Bautain's life: the period of the founding of the "Strasbourg school," and of the growing fame of the "Strasbourg Philosophy." It begins with his suspension, in 1822, and ends with the issuing, in 1834, of the Bishop's *Avertissement* condemning his philosophy.

[46] *Ibid.*, 6-7.

The attempt of the Government to suppress Bautain's teaching was actually the means of widening and deepening its influence. Certain of his former students came to him and asked for private instruction. Acceding to their request, he opened an informal class in Philosophy at Mlle. Humann's house in the Rue de la Toussaint. The project had a startling success. A motley group of "French, Germans, English, Russians; Catholics, Protestants, Greek schismatics, and Jews"[47] was soon to be seen flocking regularly to Mlle. Humann's to sit at the feet of the new prophet.

It was, in fact, in the *rôle* of prophet that Bautain now appeared. Stripping away all academic formalities, he preached his new philosophy as a sort of Gospel, which could solve the perplexities and warm the hearts of all the youth. Many were repelled by his teaching; the group never became large; but those who remained became genuine disciples, or at least prospective disciples, hanging upon every word that fell from the Master's lips.

The phenomenon was not uncommon in that age of Romanticism. The idea of the inspired genius, charged with a message from Heaven, was not confined to Christian circles. The solemn egotism of Victor Hugo, delivering himself of oracular utterances to a hushed circle of reverent admirers, was characteristic of the epoch.[48] It was a generation afflicted with *mal de siècle;* and the one hope which relieved the Romantic melancholy then so assiduously cultivated by the well-bred youth was the hope that some inspired prophet and leader might at any moment arise. Wherever a word of calm assurance was spoken, there were those who were ready to accept it with implicit faith. Franz Baader had his circle of admirers; so had Lamennais; but nowhere was there a more worshipful band than this which gathered about Louis Bautain and Mlle. Humann—St. Augustine and his mother Monica, as many called them[49]—in the little house on the Rue de la Toussaint.

As in every band of disciples, there was an inner group which lived on terms of peculiar intimacy with the Master, and with his

[47] De Régny, 88.

[48] Hugo once, it is said, announced to his disciples that he believed in God. Silence followed the utterance; the poet continued to ruminate, with his chin in his beard. "*Merveil!*" whispered a young woman, with a look of awe upon her countenance: "a God who believes in God!"

[49] Others, less respectfully, referred to Bautain as "the new Pythagoras." (*Ens. Phil. B,* 631-634.)

"spiritual mother." In the early days of the "Strasbourg School," this group consisted of four young men: Adolphe Carl (Mlle. Humann's nephew) and—curiously enough—three young Jews, Theodore Ratisbonne, Isadore Goschler, and Jules Lewel (or Lével). It was during the gradual conversion of these three young Jews to the Catholic faith that the letters were written which later were collected and published under the name of *Philosophie du Christianisme*[50]—the classical source for the doctrines of the School, and by all odds the most fascinating work which Bautain ever produced. The title of it may seem a bit pretentious, for a collection of letters; but it is really quite exact, for a complete Christian philosophy of religion is developed, bit by bit, as the correspondence proceeds. As a matter of fact, the letters were not occasional at all; the five parties to the discussion saw each other practically every day. They were simply following a not uncommon convention of the age of Romanticism, and conversing on paper—feeling freer under those circumstances to disembosom themselves to one another. Each takes a pen name; Bautain is "the Master"; Carl is "Adolphe"; Ratisbonne is "Adéodat"; Goschler, "Julien"; Lewel, "Eudore." The three Jews reveal their religious aspirations and perplexities; the Master calmly expounds the Truth, meeting each objection as it arises, showing no proselyting zeal and merely urging them to be true to the faith of their fathers and the aspirations of their own hearts; Adolphe acts as intermediary, presenting the objections of the Jews to the Master, and showing how the Master's replies meet the objections. In the end, persuasion is complete: Ratisbonne, Goschler, and Lewel all come to regard Christianity as the crown of Judaism, and, to the consternation of their relatives, openly embrace the Catholic faith. Thus the New Apologetics won its first triumph.

The *Philosophy of Christianity* was not published at this time; the letters seemed too sacredly private for publication, and it was only the heat of controversy and the threatened dissolution of the Strasbourg School which induced Bautain to lay them before the world.[51] During this same period, however, he was publishing

[50] Abbrev.: *Phil. Chr.*

[51] In 1835. A few selected passages were published in 1830, in pamphlet form. For complete list of Bautain's published works, see de Régny, 476.

several works which mark significant stages in the development of his philosophical system. In 1825, he published a slim volume of aphorisms and short essays, setting forth some of his leading ideas in popular style.[52] In 1826, on finishing his medical course, he presented as his thesis for the degree of Doctor of Medicine a fragment of a philosophy of nature, *Propositions générales sur la vie*, in which the fundamental idea of his philosophy, life as conditional spontaneity, receives exact biological formulation.[53] On the basis of this biological formula, a genetic psychology is worked out, designed to serve as a foundation for a philosophy of education, a theory of knowledge, and a metaphysic—all to the great mystification of the examining committee! In 1827 appeared his brilliant *Discours sur la morale de l'Evangile comparée à la morale des philosophes*, which was awarded a gold medal by the *Société Académique de la Marne*.[54] Here the genetic psychology worked out in the *Propositions* is made the basis of a classification and critique of some of the leading ethical systems—each corresponding to one of the stages in the process of mental development, which culminates in the Christian stage. Finally—to complete our picture of Bautain's multiform activities at this most fertile period in his career—in his lectures at the University, where he had been reinstated in 1824, he was developing a complete philosophy, which he intended to publish later in systematic form. He offered a new course on Logic in 1824; on Ethics in 1825; on Anthropology (including Psychology) in 1826-27.

Meanwhile, the other members of the School of Strasbourg had been applying the principles of the Master's philosophy in other fields. Adolphe Carl won a prize in 1824 with an essay on the question whether rhetoric or logic should come first in public education. The reader may not perceive that this is the question whether faith precedes reason in another form; but Carl perceived it, and made the essay the occasion of a new application of the

[52] *Variétés Philosophiques*, Strasbourg, Silbermann, 1825. Abbrev.: *Variétés*.

[53] "Man lives only by intussusception of the life which surrounds and penetrates him, and by exposition, emission, or radiation of the life he receives and has received. In other terms, man lives, in his soul, in his mind, and in his body, by subjectivating the objective and by objectivating the subjective." (33). I shall give a good deal of attention to the *Propositions* in chapter II. Abbrev.: *Props*.

[54] Strasbourg, Février, 1827. Abbrev.: *Mor. Ev. P.*

Strasbourg Philosophy. In 1827, he published two theses on *The Origin and Nature of Language* and *Articulate Language*, which are our chief sources for the linguistic philosophy of the school; and in 1828, having finished a course in medicine, in emulation of the Master, he published a thesis entitled *Du matérialisme en médecine*, in which he defended medical science against the charge of materialism, and sketched an idealistic theory of mind and body reminiscent of the *Propositions sur la vie*. Ratisbonne and Goschler were meanwhile pursuing legal studies; their theses, on *Les obligations qui naissent du mariage* and *La puissance paternelle*, were both strongly imbued with the principles of the school.[55] Later, during the transition period before their definitive conversion, they carried on a remarkable work of reorganization and reform in the Jewish schools of Strasbourg, applying the Bautainian philosophy to the problem of moral and religious education. The principles on which they proceeded are admirably stated in a pamphlet of Ratisbonne's, published in 1828: *Essai sur l'éducation morale*.[56] This educational reform movement among the Strasbourg Jews long outlasted the conversion of its two leaders.

It is conceivable that Bautain might have gone on thus, tranquilly and unofficially exerting his influence upon the youth of Strasbourg, and contributing through his lectures and writings to the general movement of French thought. If he had done so, we should undoubtedly have had from his pen a more nearly complete and a better balanced system of philosophy than that which he actually left behind him. As a private individual, he might have been allowed a degree of latitude in philosophical speculation not permitted to a priest. As in the case of men like de Maistre and Ballanche, the Church would have been too grateful for the genuinely religious and Catholic tendency of his thinking to be querulous about matters of detail; a layman might be excused for theological inaccuracies on the ground of ignorance.[57]

But instead of choosing the path of prudence and tranquillity,

[55] All three theses published, Silbermann, 1827, 1828.

[56] Strasbourg, Février, 1828. Crowned by the Strasbourg Society of Arts and Sciences.

[57] This is not to say that the Church exercises no control over lay opinion. Augustin Bonnetty, editor of the *Annales de Philosophie Chrétienne*, was forced to sign a paper in 1855 recanting certain anti-intellectualist views borrowed from Bautain. (De Régny, chap. xxii.)

Bautain deliberately chose, with a courage that one cannot but admire, to risk the rocks and shoals of an ecclesiastical career. The purity and nobility of his motives cannot be questioned. He was convinced that the Catholic faith was the great panacea for the spiritual cravings and moral ills of his generation. His philosophy had been the means of winning a considerable group of uncommonly brilliant young men to the Catholic faith. Had he the right to hide his candle under a bushel? Might it not be that if the Church were to adopt his method of presenting the faith, the whole intellectual aristocracy of France could be reclaimed for Christianity? But this would require a sweeping reform in the whole method of teaching philosophy in the ecclesiastical schools; and only a priest could initiate such a reform. Hence, resisting all the entreaties and warnings of his academic associates, he applied for ordination.

Bautain cherished no illusions as to the difficulties he was likely to encounter in attempting to reform the teaching of philosophy in the Church. In a letter to Riambourg, after stating that he had entered the Church because "in my profound conviction, there is no salvation for mankind and in particular for the present century and for our nation, except in her," he continues as follows:

> When I entered her doors, I was not ignorant of all that lay ahead of me there: I knew that the narrowest Rationalism was devastating her and drying up her vital sap—and certainly, after drinking the cup of Rationalism down to the dregs in philosophy, I was not going to seek it in theology, I was not going to caress it and praise it. On the contrary, I was going to combat it by all the means God gave me, because I am firmly convinced that it is the greatest plague of ecclesiastical instruction.[58]

Controversy and strife awaited him; he knew that from the start. So did Mlle. Humann. When he communicated to her his decision to enter the priesthood,

> she appeared [says Bautain] neither surprised nor overjoyed. "I expected it," she said to me; . . . "I am more moved than I can tell you; for if I hope much, I also fear much. We will consult God together." Some days afterward we went to a sanctuary which was celebrated in that region, where we received the Sacrament with this intent; and

[58] FB,K, *Cahier* II, 18; Cf. *ibid.*, *Cahier* I, 15-18, Letter to Guizot.

when I asked her on our return what God had put into her heart concerning me, she answered me simply with this word of St. Paul: "I will show him what he will have to suffer for my name's sake."[59]

Bautain's intention to enter the priesthood had to be deferred for a short time, for he had no mind to have his schemes of reform blocked at the start by falling into the hands of unsympathetic superiors. "Ah, if there were a bishop who understood my position!" he would sigh. What was his delight when he heard that Mgr. Lepappe de Trévern, a prelate interested in the promotion of higher education among the clergy, had been appointed Bishop of Strasbourg. Bautain went to his new Bishop at once and told him frankly that, though he and his whole band of disciples felt strongly drawn to the priesthood, they had no sympathy with the prevalent mode of instruction at the *Grand Séminaire de Strasbourg*, and "if it were absolutely necessary to pass through that gate, they would give up entering the clergy." Monseigneur was not shocked; he agreed that ecclesiastical studies were in a deplorable state of degeneration, and mentioned that he was hoping to found a *Maison de Hautes Études Ecclésiastiques* at Molsheim. If M. Bautain and his young followers wished to train themselves for the priesthood, they might go there. The Bishop's suggestion was seized at once; the first pupil to be admitted to the new school was Goschler, who fled there late in 1827 after breaking all ties with his parents and with the Synagogue. For him, and for Lewel and Ratisbonne, whose break with their kin came a few months later, Mgr. de Trévern prescribed a severe course of theological studies; but Bautain and Carl, who presented themselves at Molsheim in August, 1828, received the tonsure and the minor orders on the third day after their arrival, were ordained sub-deacons on the fourth day, and then, after a two months' retreat under the direction of an old priest, were excused from further studies on the ground that they were already sufficiently prepared. November saw Bautain preaching, while still a deacon, at the church of Saint-Pierre-le-Jeune, near Mlle. Humann's. His success was immediate; the city was profoundly stirred. Ordained a priest in December, he was soon called to preach at the Cathedral; the Bishop,

[59] De Régny, 147.

pleased at the results, bestowed upon him the title of Honorary Canon.

Meanwhile, the little "Society" at Mlle. Humann's grew and thrived. New recruits were added to the circle, among them Alphonse Gratry, destined to be the most famous of Bautain's pupils; new conversions took place, among them that of Jules Lewel's brother Nestor. In 1830, the Bishop gave the Society a most signal token of his confidence: he gave over to it the complete control of the *Petit Séminaire*, which had to be reorganized on account of the changes introduced by the Revolution of July. Now, it seemed, Bautain was in a position to begin the reform of ecclesiastical education of which he had dreamed. If he had not control of the *Grand Séminaire*, where theological instruction was given, he had control of the school where young aspirants to the priesthood had their whole mental outlook determined. It would be hard for the *Grand Séminaire* to undo what the *Petit Séminaire* had done. The enthusiasm of the band rose high at this great opportunity. They applied themselves to the task of reorganizing the studies at the Little Seminary with such vigor that all Strasbourg was soon impressed with the results attained. Then came a chance to extend the reform to new spheres. In 1829, Isidore Goschler had been called to Besançon to become professor of philosophy in the *Collège*. In 1832, Cardinal de Rohan invited him to take charge of the organization of a *Maison des Hautes Études* at Besançon, similar to the one at Molsheim. With him went Henri de Bonnechose, a talented young lawyer whom he had recently led to join Bautain's band.

Mlle. Humann saw with great joy these signs of the growing influence of her spiritual children; but looking forward to a day when the bond of common loyalty to her would be removed, and when the very success of the band might lead to the scattering of its members to various positions of authority, and so dissipate its influence, she urged that the *Messieurs de Saint-Louis*, as they had come to be called,[60] should bind themselves together, not exactly into a religious order or community, but into a sort of spiritual

[60] From the *Église St.-Louis*, to whose parish the *Petit Séminaire* appertained; also from the fact that both Louise Humann and Louis Bautain (not to mention Mgr. Colmar) had St. Louis for their patron saint.

family. Accordingly, on March 16, 1832, the brothers all signed a *Pacte de famille*, drawn up by their spiritual mother, pledging themselves, among other things, to live together, as far as possible, and to hold all goods in common; "to recognize and respect the hierarchical order which God by his calling had established amongst the brothers" (meaning that Bautain, who was first called, was always to be obeyed as the "elder brother"); and "never to court voluntarily, by any act or word, any promotion or advancement whatsoever in the Church."[61] Thus bound together by a free promise of mutual loyalty and affection, it was hoped that the band might survive the shock of Mlle. Humann's death, and weather all the unknown rocks and shoals that lay ahead. The precaution, as it proved, was not unnecessary!

We have now returned to the point in Bautain's career at which we first made his acquaintance: the years 1833 and 1834. During these years he reached the high-water mark of his fame and influence. In 1833 his essay *On the Teaching of Philosophy in France in the Nineteenth Century* brought him into international prominence, and his philosophy began to be discussed in all the religious periodicals. The students at Paris, as we have seen, coupled his name with that of Lacordaire, in asking for a new type of preaching at Notre Dame. The star of Lamennais was waning, blood-red, in the West; all eyes turned to this new star that was rising in the East. For the moment, it seemed that Bautain had all France at his feet, listening for his new Evangel, so confidently promised but as yet so imperfectly developed in his fragmentary writings. For the moment, his dream of rejuvenating the whole intellectual life of the Church, and restating Catholic philosophy in a shape adapted to the needs of the age, seemed possible of realization. Théodule Foisset had already pointed to the school of Strasbourg as the "foremost" example of the vitality and progressiveness of Catholic thought, and the best refutation of the charge that Catholicism appealed only to the ignorant.[62] Now he triumphantly announced that the man of the hour had come, and was ready to speak:

> At last M. Bautain has called to mind the hopes which were built

[61] *Rev. Europ.*, VI, 33-34. [62] *Ibid.*

upon him toward 1829, when M. Cousin used to say to him, "My task is to write the history of philosophy, but you will create a philosophy." A large number of Catholics (and this fact is personally known to the author of this article) have been pressing him urgently for a long time to publish a résumé of his lectures. He is about to yield to their entreaties. . . . You see, we have not here the commonplaces of the preacher. Neither have we the burning invective of the *Essai de l'indifférence*.[63] We have a man who has lived with his century, who knows it of long acquaintance, and who tells it what it is, without bitterness; so that one has only to look within oneself a moment, and consult one's own observations, in order to cry out, as before a speaking likeness, "That's it, to be sure!"[64]

What Bautain's influence might have been, had he published his lecture courses just at this moment, it is hard to calculate. They would certainly have been read with the greatest avidity. If he had realized how soon the pall of disfavor and oblivion was to shut down upon him, he would surely have occupied himself otherwise, in those crucial years of 1833 and 1834, than with the writing of two or three controversial pamphlets that only helped to precipitate the storm of hostility. It must be said that, for a would-be reformer, he showed little tact. He seemed to feel that before he could lay the details of his constructive system before the public, he must first complete the work of demolishing everything else in sight. There was not one important school of thought that he did not attack. For his former associates, the Eclectics, he showed no mercy; Victor Cousin was cut to the quick. For the time-honored Scholastic arguments in defense of Christianity he had only ridicule; the cry of "heresy" began to arise from the seminaries. For the school of Lamennais, to which most of the progressive young priests still belonged, he showed no sympathy at all; and the mercilessness with which he exposed the fallacies of the "common-sense" philosophy thus alienated from him the liberal group which might have been expected to support him.

The first rumbles of the gathering storm began to be heard even before the publication of the essay "On the Teaching of

[63] The reference is to Lamennais's *Essai de l'indifférence en matière de religion.*

[64] *Rev. Europ.*, VI, 154, 155.

Philosophy in France." At Strasbourg, complaints began to be sent to the Bishop about the teaching of Philosophy at the *Petit Séminaire*. The teaching was in French instead of Latin; the traditional text-books were not used; logical disputations were omitted. Monseigneur ordered the use of the classical *Philosophie de Lyon*,[65] and the resumption of Latin disputations. At Besançon, Goschler found himself faced with the opposition of both teachers and students, in spite of the Cardinal. The teachers resented his attacks upon Scholasticism; the students, his attacks upon Lamennais. A revolt of the students took place one day, obviously with the connivance of some of the faculty; and at the death of the Cardinal in February, 1833, Goschler and Bonnechose returned to Strasbourg. Letters accusing them of heresy were sent to the Bishop of Strasbourg, and to Rome. When Bautain went to Paris later in the year, he was conscious that hostile influences had been at work there too.

The *Essay* itself brought forth many unfriendly comments. An anonymous follower of Lamennais, after taking a trip to Strasbourg in order to spy upon the professor in the class-room and get incriminating evidence if possible, published a hastily-written book against him—650 pages of acid but often telling criticism, mingled with scurrilous personal abuse. This was the only shot that came from the camp of Lamennais; but from the camp of the Scholastics there came continuous rounds of artillery. The *Ami de la religion*, a prominent Catholic periodical, showed itself hostile to Bautain from the moment the *Essay* appeared; and, from that time on, published a series of short editorials and long articles against him. The most powerful of these articles seem to have emanated from the *Grand Séminaire* at Strasbourg, where, as we have seen, a Neo-Scholastic movement of real acumen and discrimination was going on, under the leadership of Raess and Liebermann. To them, the somewhat vague Romanticism of Bautain and his school seemed nothing but intellectual slovenliness, tending to blur all the firm outlines of theological thinking and to introduce endless errors under cover of darkness. Above all,

[65] *Institutiones philosophicae, auctoritate D.D. Archiëpiscopi Lugdunensis*, 1792. Ascribed to Father Valla.

his attack upon the rational proofs of religion seemed to them to be dangerous in the extreme; for they were not ready, like him to appeal to intuition, and mistrusted the scientific analogies by which he sought to show the accord of the divine and natural orders.

It was the influence of the *Grand Séminaire*, seconded by that of the Strasbourg clergy, who disliked the clannishness of the *Messieurs de St.-Louis*, and envied their success, which gradually alienated the Bishop's regard for Bautain. At first he contented himself with opposing Bautain's anti-intellectualism, in public and private discussion. Bautain, always keen for an argument on this question, gave him as good as he sent. Then, becoming alarmed at certain theological consequences of Bautain's philosophy, he drew up six questions and demanded specific answers to them. Bautain complied—at length. Then, suddenly and unexpectedly, in September, 1834, the Bishop broke off what looked like a friendly philosophical discussion and issued an *Avertissement* to all the clergy of the diocese, warning them against the dangerous heresies contained in Bautain's teachings. Copies were sent to Rome, and to all the bishops of France. Three weeks later the *Messieurs de St.-Louis* were ordered to leave the *Petit Séminaire*, and deprived of the right to preach.

A controversy thus began which held public attention for six long years. Rome acknowledged receipt of the *Avertissement*, but judiciously refrained from making definite pronouncement on the merits of the question at issue. Hence Bautain did not feel called upon to submit, and continued the debate.

> Then [as Professor Baudin picturesquely describes it] one saw Strasbourg divide into two camps, where there were terribly extemporaneous theologians and philosophers in abundance, and these not the least ardent. The newspapers intervened, of course; pamphlets multiplied; and the debate spread to wider and wider circles. Bautain had little success in France, where people have too much of an esteem for Reason to listen willingly when she is slandered. In Germany, the Tübingen faculty, with the celebrated Moehler, came out in his favor, and sent him a Doctor's diploma in Theology. The Bonn faculty, on the contrary, with Hermes, came out against him. And the whole of Christian Europe, Protestant as well as Catholic, kept its eyes attentively fixed upon Strasbourg and its philosopher.[66]

[66] Baudin, I, 22.

The mention of Hermes perhaps suggests the reason why Rome remained neutral in the *affaire Bautain*. Professor Hermes of Bonn had been maintaining a thorough-going rationalism; according to him, all the truths of religion are such that, when one tries the experiment of Cartesian doubt upon them, they reaffirm themselves by the unaided light of reason. He had thus been led to rationalize the Catholic faith to such an extent that in his system the traditional doctrines were hardly recognizable. The *Avertissement* of Mgr. de Trévern came to Rome just when the writings of Hermes were being examined there; they were officially condemned in 1835, despite long-continued protests on the part of his many followers.[67] This condemnation gave Bautain a distinct tactical advantage. He accused his opponents, who maintained the powers of the reason against his attacks, of falling into Hermesianism; which put them in a very delicate situation.[68] If Rome were to condemn Bautain and uphold the Bishop, it could do so only by carefully distinguishing between the illegitimate rationalism of Hermes and the legitimate rationalism of the Bishop. This was not easy to do; for the extreme anti-intellectualism of Bautain had provoked an equally extreme rationalism in the Bishop, and there was to be witnessed the extraordinary spectacle of an ecclesiastic exalting Reason above Faith, while endeavoring to demolish the position of a philosopher who exalted Faith above Reason! Add to this the fact that the Bishop was a Gallican, while Bautain was a loyal Ultramontanist, and it becomes perfectly comprehensible that the Holy See should have refrained for six years from all intervention in the dispute.

During the heat of the controversy, Bautain published his *Philosophie du Christianisme*, with an impressive Introduction by Bonnechose, and full accounts by Ratisbonne, Goschler, and Lewel, of the circumstances of their conversions. His object was to give concrete proof of the legitimacy and effectiveness of his non-argumentative apologetic, by showing how it satisfied the questionings and religious longings of these typical young Romanticists.

[67] Hermes had died in 1831; but his teachings continued to exercise a controlling influence at Bonn.

[68] One of Hermes' followers actually wrote a book aiming to prove the identity of Hermes' position with that of the Bishop. (See de Régny, 236.)

The Bishop countered by appointing a committee of professors from the *Grand Séminaire,* to pronounce upon the orthodoxy of the *Philosophie du Christianisme,* and other published works of Bautain—a committee which in due time, reported that in Bautain's writings "not a dogma, not a mystery is presented in its purity, without some admixture of error."[69] Meanwhile, the *Messieurs de St.-Louis,* deprived of their ecclesiastical functions, occupied themselves with the founding of a whole series of primary and secondary schools, where their pedagogical principles were worked out even more consistently than at the *Petit Séminaire.*

The general impression among the French Catholics was that each of the parties in the controversy was contending for a vital principle. Accordingly, various friendly mediators offered their services—among them Mgr. Donnet, Bishop Coadjutor of Nancy, and M. Choppin d'Arnouville, prefect of the Lower Rhine. Several times Bautain and his followers signed propositions which seemed to settle everything amicably; but each time the Bishop, seeking to force a more abject and humiliating surrender, made some unreasonable modification in the formula of submission or some impossible demand which opened the breach once more. On one occasion, a formula of complete submission had been signed, and congratulations were pouring in upon Bautain for his exemplary behavior, when a Protestant paper, twitting him on having sacrificed his principles, called forth from Bonnechose an injudicious letter in which he maintained that nothing essential had been sacrificed—which of course provoked a new outburst of wrath on the part of the Bishop.

Finally, on the advice of Lacordaire, who had heard from authoritative sources that Bautain's books seemed likely to be put on the *Index*, Bautain and Bonnechose set out for Rome to lay their case before the Pope. They were kindly received, for their attitude was humble and respectful; and the examination of the *Philosophie du Christianisme*—which was, in fact, already before the Congregation of the Index—was, at Bautain's request, confided to an Italian prelate, Cardinal Mezzofante. Months passed, and no decision was reached. Finally, Bautain and Bonnechose

[69] *Rapport à Mgr. l'Évêque de Strasbourg sur les écrits de M. l'Abbé Bautain. Publié par ordre de Sa Grandeur.* Strasbourg, 1838.

signed a blanket agreement, pledging themselves in advance to submit to whatever decision might be rendered. The examination of the book was then handed over to the noted theologian Perrone, who had already had several friendly discussions with Bautain. The Pope gave them his Apostolic Benediction, and they departed, hopeful, but still doubtful of their fate. They had occupied themselves during their sojourn in Rome by consulting many theologians on the orthodoxy of their position; and it seems clear that Bautain had come to recognize the extreme and paradoxical nature of many of his views. He had been made to feel his temerity in writing upon semi-theological themes without ever having had a thorough course in theology; and his mystic certitude of the truth of his philosophy had been sadly shaken. He went to Rome still believing he was an inspired genius; he came back conscious of his fallibility and doubtful of his most cherished ideas.

Returning to Strasbourg in this chastened mood, he found the Bishop exhausted by the controversy, and disposed to settle the matter by appointing a Coadjutor to whom the whole settlement could be left. For a time, it looked as if it might be made easy for Bautain to submit, for his friend the Abbé Affre was proposed as Coadjutor; but Affre was made Archbishop of Paris, and Bautain found himself, instead, in the hands of his chief opponent, the Abbé Raess. There was nothing to do but to sign Raess's severe formula of recantation with as much grace as possible. The whole band subscribed to the formula on September 8, 1840. Thus ended the controversy, and thus ended Bautain's attempt to reform the teaching of philosophy in the Catholic seminaries.

Since Bautain owes his somewhat dubious fame among Catholics to the fact that his name is attached to certain heretical propositions, we may as well give this formula of recantation. It consists of six propositions, corresponding almost exactly with the six questions cited in the *Avertissement*. The Bishop's original position is reaffirmed without compromise, save that, in the first proposition, the emphatic word *alone* is omitted after the word *reasoning*.

1. Reasoning can prove with certitude the existence of God and the infinity of his perfections. Faith is a heavenly gift which presupposes revelation; it cannot properly therefore be appealed to in proving the existence of God to an atheist.

2. The divinity of the Mosaic revelation is proved with certitude by the oral and written tradition of the Synagogue and of Christianity.

3. The proof drawn from the miracles of Jesus Christ, obvious and striking to those who were eye-witnesses, has *not* lost its force, with its *éclat*, for subsequent generations. . . .

4. One has no right to expect an unbeliever to admit the resurrection of our divine Saviour, before furnishing him with certain proofs thereof; and these proofs are deduced by reasoning.

5. In these various questions reason precedes faith, and should lead us to it.

6. However enfeebled and darkened our reason may have become through original sin, it retains enough clearness and force to guide us with certitude to the existence of God, to the revelation made to the Jews by Moses, and to that made to the Christians by our adorable God-man.[70]

The reader will note that all the heresies recanted under these six heads can be reduced to one: the effort to displace the old apologetic, based upon miracle, prophecy, oral and written testimony, and other forms of *external evidence*, and to replace it by an apologetic in which the constant appeal is to *experience*, and in which the skeptic is invited to believe nothing which he cannot personally verify. As Moehler puts it in his letter to Bautain,

You are making war upon a Theology whose characteristic mark I might describe as the search for external demonstrations; upon a Theology which furnishes a mass of proofs, but does not acquaint one with the thing itself which is to be proved, . . . and is capable rather of hanging Christianity externally on a man, than of transforming the man himself into a Christian. . . . In contrast with such an art of external propping up, which does not enter into the living spirit of the Gospel, you are endeavoring to let it unfold itself, and thus establish itself through its own strength, convinced that when set upon its own feet it will best demonstrate its invincible strength and eternal power to the unprejudiced mind, through the organic unfolding of its divine content. . . . Since it has a vital relationship to our spirit, nothing proves the truth so well as the truth itself; whereas the use of proofs which lie without and beside the truth is just for that reason not properly adapted to bring spirit, heart, and mind to a decision for the truth, to bring the divine Word

[70] De Régny, 288-289. See also Denzinger's *Enchiridion*, which, as de Régny points out, gives a slightly different version, based not on the authentic propositions of 1840, but upon the propositions which were subscribed to in 1835.

into our own inner soul as a fruitful seed and at once to call forth a vital conviction.[71]

This is indeed a serious heresy. It was a sure instinct which led the Bishop to single out this aspect of Bautain's teaching for his condemnation; for Bautain was undoubtedly, in just this aspect of his philosophy, a Modernist before the Modernists. His objection to the Scholastic apologetic is precisely the objection which Auguste Sabatier and other Protestant Modernists urge against the Old Theology: that it depends on extrinsic instead of intrinsic evidence to prove the validity of its dogmas.[72] Opposition to the Scholastic method was of course Bautain's chief offence. Nothing is said of this offence in the formula of 1840; but when Augustin Bonnetty later took up Bautain's accusations against the Scholastics, he was required to recant.[73]

It may be asked how Bautain could possibly subscribe to propositions which ran so completely counter to his whole life's enterprise. To non-Catholics, an act of this sort is always a mystery; and it is always a matter of curiosity to know by what process of reasoning a man comes to justify in his own eyes the acceptance of such a crushing humiliation. In Bautain's case, the motives are fairly evident. In the first place, humility was the very corner-stone of his philosophy. Since his conversion, the very notion of the "autonomy" of the individual reason and conscience was anathema to him. Note the words with which he concluded his Letter to the Rector in 1822. After saying that he had set forth his teachings with "complete conviction" of their truth, he adds:

> But I do not forget that I have superiors, and that the Christian's first duty is deference to authority. If therefore the competent authority, after examining my paragraphs, which I am ready to submit to its inspection, declares my teaching harmful, and forbids me to continue it, I shall subscribe unreservedly to its judgment, and shall follow only that method and line of work which it is pleased to prescribe for me.[74]

[71] Moehler, J. A., *Schriften und Aufsätze*, ed. Döllinger, Regensburg, 1839, II, 142-143.

[72] Cf. the well-known Introduction to his *Religions of Authority and the Religion of the Spirit.*

[73] See the formula, quoted by de Régny, 396-397.

[74] FB,U, 13.

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If so complete a submission was due to civil authority, what was due to the authority of the Church?

In the second place, however, Bautain had now come to mistrust his own philosophy to some extent—particularly the anti-intellectualistic aspect of it—and, conceiving that these propositions were directed against this aspect of his teaching, he was really willing to make recantation. He had been upheld in his attitude of rebellion against Episcopal authority by the belief that the Bishop's views were heretical, and his own views had the weight of the Church's authority on their side; but now that the Church had failed to sustain him, he was willing to go more than half-way in atoning for his error. In later years, he never lost an opportunity of acknowledging his mistake. Once, in the midst of an oration in Ste.-Geneviève before a brilliant Parisian audience, he went out of his way to allude to his former errors:

> In order to give a wider range to the Word of God, I was led to weaken the validity of the human reason; and, to make an end of rationalism at a stroke, I menaced the very life of the reason, like those imprudent physicians who risk killing the patient by attacking the disease too violently. Yes, if I sinned then, I sinned through excess of faith; but the Church, always wise, because she is assisted by the divine Spirit, approves no excess, not even those which appear to be profitable to her.[75]

Finally, it can hardly be denied that Bautain signed the formula with some mental reservations—a procedure not confined to Catholic circles. He felt—and not without reason—that the controversy had largely been based upon a misunderstanding of his real position; and so, in disavowing certain somewhat unfortunate expressions, he was not really disavowing his main contention. He cherished for many years, as his manuscript notes show, the hope of writing a *Critique of the Reason* which should supersede Kant's. In it he hoped to set forth all his essential ideas concerning faith and reason, while keeping within the bounds of the propositions he had signed. A Scholastic, used to making fine distinctions, might have succeeded in this; but Bautain was trained to the flowing, oratorical style of the Eclectics, and could not think in cramped quarters. Years afterwards, however, he wrote a letter hailing with pleasure

[75] De Régny, 381.

the attempt of Professors Ubaghs and Laforêt of Louvain to state a position similar to his own. He thanks them for calling attention to the real issue, which, he insists, is not the *logical* question of the "scope and range of the natural reason," but the *psychological* question of the "primitive development of reason and of the acquisition of knowledge." Logically, no doubt, reason is prior to faith; but psychologically, he insists, reason is posterior in order of genesis, both in the individual and in the race. He regrets that he never could get his adversaries to discuss that issue:

> They always spoke of the *unaided* reason *(la raison seule)* reduced to its unaided natural powers; and they understood by that a completely developed reason, in full possession of itself, aided by all the means of human science, civilization, and tradition. I then asked, but in vain, what you have asked with better results: How did the natural reason develop? And, if it is certain that it has not within itself the initiative to function, and needed an external fillip to start the primitive motion of its faculties and the formation of knowledge, can it be said that it ever was unaided, and that by itself, unaided, it has produced all its products? . . . That is the truly philosophical question which out-tops the former question, and which alone is capable, . . . if properly solved, of completely undermining Rationalism's doctrine of the absolute and entirely independent spontaneity of the human mind.[76]

This was Bautain's last contribution to the controversy over reason and faith. The views of Ubaghs and Laforêt were tolerated for a while; but at length they, too, had to recant. *Fideism* became a heresy, and Bautain was designated as its chief protagonist.

The rest of Bautain's life is a story of constant frustration and gathering obscurity. Mlle. Humann, his good angel, had died during the heat of the controversy; and, after her death, it became increasingly difficult to hold the band together. Bautain, it must be admitted, was too imperious and autocratic to make an ideal leader of men. Once the truth of his philosophy had been thrown in doubt by the Church, his followers began to chafe under his rule; and it was only the explicit vow of obedience in the "Family Pact" which kept some of them loyal to him. In 1841, they all left Strasbourg, having bought the College of Juilly, near Paris, where they hoped to carry on their educational projects on a larger

[76] Letter to Ubaghs, quoted by de Régny, 420-421.

scale. For a time, Bautain's hopes ran high; but the enterprise eventually failed on account of the defection, one after another, of most of the band. Gratry, who had never signed the "Family Pact," did not emigrate to Juilly in the first place. He became famous as a philosopher, but took care not to emphasize the fact that his philosophy was largely borrowed from Bautain. Ratisbonne became the founder of the "Priests of Our Lady of Zion," a now famous order for the conversion of the Jews. He found it convenient to forget, so far as possible, that he had ever been associated with Bautain, and looked upon the whole period of his discipleship to the now discredited philosopher as a blot on his career. He even tried to dissuade de Régny from writing the life of Bautain, intimating that he had made an ass of himself and had better be consigned to oblivion.[77] Bonnechose, deputed to carry on a special mission at St.-Louis-des-Français in Rome, was gradually drawn away from the band, and forged a career of his own. He, too, became alienated from Bautain, who found it difficult to forgive his defection. When he became Cardinal, Bautain wrote him a reproachful letter, ironically congratulating him on having at last reached the top of that hill which they used to climb together daily, to plead their case at Rome, saying "*Ascendamus iterum.*"[78] Bautain himself always remained at the foot of the hill, rejecting all ecclesiastical preferments.

It is not unlikely that external influences had a share in breaking up the band. Father Rozaven, writing to Mgr. de Trévern from Rome shortly before Bautain and Bonnechose left for Strasbourg, assured him that the kind reception accorded to the two pilgrims did not imply approval of their opinions, or of their ambition to found an order. He urges the Bishop, "above all," to see that they do not succeed in forming the "society" they propose, or rather in maintaining what already exists. He has heard, he says, "that when they have won an adherent they take great care to isolate him from the company of those who do not share their sentiments. Presumption," he adds, "has been in all times the great rock on which neophytes strike; . . . having enjoyed some

[77] See his letter to de Régny in Père Ingold's collection of unedited letters, *L'Abbé Bautain et ses disciples*, reprinted from *Miscellanea Alsatica*, Colmar and Paris, 1897. It is a very scurrilous letter, and reflects no credit on its writer.

[78] This letter is also in Père Ingold's collection.

consideration before their conversion, they easily persuade themselves that they should be listened to like oracles."[79] Was Father Rozaven speaking semi-officially, or merely voicing the views of the faction at Rome that was opposed to Bautain? It is not for us to thread the intricacies of ecclesiastical politics, but it is not improbable that Bautain's failure in his life-work was at least partly due to Rome's proverbial suspicion of "neophytes."[80] Newman and Tyrrell encountered similar obstacles. Whatever the cause, the fact is that Bautain died a disappointed man.

Perhaps the cruellest disappointment which fell to his lot was the collapse of public interest in his philosophy. In 1834, when it was rumored that he was about to begin to publish his system, all France was a-tiptoe with excitement; but when, in 1839, the first volumes appeared, containing a general introduction to philosophy and a lengthy treatise on *Experimental Psychology*,[81] they got a very luke-warm reception; and his *Moral Philosophy*,[82] which appeared in 1842, was hardly noticed at all. When the taint of heresy becomes fastened to the name of a Catholic philosopher, *c'en est fait de lui!* The Abbé became conscious that he and his philosophy already belonged to the past. He never published any more of his system.

After one has learned to love the fire, dash, and enthusiasm of Bautain's earlier writings, his later philosophical works make rather melancholy reading. From 1853-1863, he lectured on Moral Theology at the Sorbonne, and all his lectures eventually found their way into print; but there is little of great significance in any of these volumes.[83] They are nothing but Bautain's earlier ethical works, revised in a spirit of sober conservatism, all originality of thought and expression being carefully eliminated in the interest

[79] *Lettres Inédites du P. Rozaven, S. J., sur les erreurs de M. Bautain.* Publiés par A. M. P. Ingold, Paris, 1902.

[80] A suspicion in no wise unjustified, if the prevention of change be the main object. Consider the changes introduced into Christian theology by converted philosophers like Justin Martyr, Augustine, and some of the Alexandrian fathers!

[81] *Philosophie. Psychologie Expérimentale*, Strasbourg, Paris, 1839. (Abbrev.: *Psych. Exp.)* New edition, Paris, 1859, with new title, *L'Esprit humain et ses facultés.*

[82] *Philosophie morale*, Paris, 1842. (Abbrev.: *Phil. Mor.)*

[83] *La Morale de l'Évangile comparée aux divers systèmes de Morale*, Paris, 1855; *Philosophie des lois*, Paris, 1860; *La conscience*, Paris, 1861; *Manuel de philosophie morale*, Paris, 1866. The first-named volume is by far the best. (Abbrev.: *Mor. Ev. D.).*

of orthodoxy. Result: a series of quite harmless but relatively uninteresting volumes. The same might be said of the only work which he published during this period on his favorite topic of epistemology: the *conférences philosophiques* read before the *Cercle Catholique* in 1842-43,[84] and later published in résumé. In these *conférences* he maintains a doctrine of the limitations of the reason very similar to his earlier doctrine; but he leans so hard at every step upon St. Thomas (or at least the neo-Platonic element in St. Thomas) that the argument limps badly, and has almost the air of a commentary. "What a pity," one is tempted to exclaim, "that so keen an intellect should be thus shackled and crippled!"

It would be a mistake, however, to think of Bautain as a prisoner chafing in captivity. For him, true liberty was to be found only in loyal obedience to authority; and the yoke of intellectual bondage never galled his shoulders, for he was convinced that the pathway to truth leads through the gateway of humility. This attitude came out most impressively in his Notre-Dame *conférences* on *Religion and Liberty*,[85] delivered in 1848, and interrupted by the outbreak of the Revolution. It was just at this time that Pius IX, the "liberal Pope"—not yet disillusioned and embittered—was inspiring many to hope for the reconciliation of Catholicism and democracy. Bautain, in these addresses, acts as the spokesman for the Catholic Liberals of France. He maintains that the Church, far from being the enemy of liberty, is the seed-plot wherein all the liberties, civil and political, have grown up; he eulogizes O'Connell as the living exemplar of the union of religion and liberty; he insists that the best way to promote liberty is to get men to submit to the authority of the Church, since it is submission to the Church's authority which produces virtue, and the greatest degree of liberty is possible only when men are virtuous. This volume is a real contribution to our understanding of Bautain's philosophy, since it applies his central principle, life as conditional spontaneity, to the field of politics, where we are all at home, and so makes the meaning of that principle transparently clear.

[84] Abbrev.: *Cerc. Cath.*

[85] *De la religion et de la liberté considerées dans leur rapports*, Paris, 1848; 2nd ed. with supplementary essay, Paris, 1865.

We have said that Bautain died a disappointed man. All his most cherished plans miscarried; all his most cherished ideas failed to meet with approval. We must not suppose, however, that he died an *unhappy* man. If he failed as a philosophical reformer, he succeeded as a preacher and spiritual advisor, particularly with the educated classes. As he advanced in years, he devoted himself more and more to quiet study and meditation, and found great satisfaction in contemplating the mysteries of the faith. Books of sermons, meditations, letters of advice to people in various stations of life, came from his pen in considerable number, and won popularity. His book on *The Art of Public Speaking* had a prodigious success.[86] Most important of all, he cultivated a spirit of Christian resignation, and learned to look upon success and failure with equanimity. Only a few weeks before his death in 1867, he completed a beautiful little book which may be considered his philosophical will and testament: *Choses d'autre monde: journal d'un philosophe, recueilli et publié par l'Abbé Bautain.*[87] Here the whole gamut of Christian ideas is once more reviewed, as in the *Philosophie du Christianisme;* but all the extreme views which gave rise to controversy are now mellowed and softened. From a literary point of view, the book is his masterpiece; the story of the conversion of the fictitious philosopher, depicted in his diary, holds one's interest from start to finish; and if not philosophically, is at least psychologically convincing. An atmosphere of calm certitude and perfect trust pervades its pages, showing that, in spite of a stormy passage, Bautain had reached his soul's haven, and had found in the Catholic faith those ultimates and absolutes for which, from his youth, he had had so unquenchable a thirst.

[86] See de Régny's bibliography for these minor works. An Eng. trans. of the *Art de parler en public* was published by Scribner, N. Y., 1859: *The Art of Extempore Speaking. Hints for the pulpit, the senate, and the bar. With additions by a member of the N. Y. bar.* Republished, Scribner, Armstrong, and Co., 1873.

[87] Published posthumously, Paris, Hachette, 1868.

## CHAPTER II

## BAUTAIN AS A PANVITALIST

HEGEL and Cousin both recognized in Bautain a capacity for system-building which aroused their expectations. If, after his conversion to Catholicism, reverence for tradition and authority tended to set limits to his speculative imagination, a remarkable unity nevertheless pervades his whole philosophy. It was his conscious aim to reduce all his teaching to a simple formula:

> All human knowledge [he says] ought . . . to be capable of being reduced to a single idea, as the universe depends upon a single Being. . . . He only knows well, who sees what he knows as a unity and at a glance, who seizes all the parts in their general relations and all the relations in a single view.[1]

Each separate science should have its *idée-mère*, its generating idea, according to Bautain, as each chapter and paragraph in a book should have its leading thought; and all these generating ideas must in their turn be brought into unity with one another, if the ideal of philosophy is to be reached.

To a considerable extent Bautain achieved his ideal.

> M. Bautain seems to have persuaded himself [complained Father Rozaven] that, in the idea of Christianity as he has formulated it for himself, the whole of theology was contained, and that, without studying details, he could deduce therefrom all the dogmas. He has not comprehended that, in the exposition of these dogmas there are modes of expression adopted by the Church, from which it is not permissible to depart.[2]

The same tendency here alluded to pervades all Bautain's philosophy. Not Schelling himself is bolder than Bautain in his systematic development of an idea through analogy and deduction. It is possible to discover in his teaching not only certain fundamental

[1] *Psych. Exp.*, II, 153.

[2] *Lettres Inédites du P. Rozaven*, S. J., 3rd letter.

metaphysical ideas and ethical ideas, which permit one to sum up his metaphysics and ethics in brief, but also certain ideas which run through his philosophy as a whole, and are applied simultaneously, by a process of bold analogical reasoning, to metaphysics and philosophy, epistemology and politics, logic and pedagogy, ethics and mathematics. They are so fundamental that they pervade all his critique of contemporary philosophy and his conception of the history of philosophy; so that an exposition of them is an essential prerequisite to the understanding of even his most occasional writings. Perhaps it was the failure to grasp these central concepts that led to his too hasty condemnation. He presented his conclusions to the public before explaining his premises; if he had followed the reverse order, the effect might have been different. We shall not imitate his unfortunate, butt-end-foremost order of exposition, but shall begin at once with his "generating ideas."

The most fundamental of all Bautain's ideas is the idea of life as a conditionally spontaneous process of *va-et-vient* in which the reaction of the subject is dependent upon the action of the object, and in which the subject, stimulated by the object, develops by continuous intussusception and polarization.

It cannot be too strongly emphasized that, while the central idea in Bautain's system is a biological idea, his chief interest is not biological but moral and religious; that is to say, the moral and religious consequences which he appears to deduce from the biological formula for life really preceded that formula in the development of his philosophy, and helped determine its selection. He proved his corollaries by means of his theorem; but he was already passionately devoted to his corollaries before he found his theorem. We may say, then, that in a certain sense the fundamental idea in his philosophy is not the idea of Life, but a moral and religious idea conceived as the result of a profound reaction against German Idealism in general and Fichte in particular. It will be remembered that Bautain's nervous break-down, the first step in his conversion, took place in the midst of his course on *Transcendental Ethics*, in which he was developing a doctrine of liberty as the goal of moral effort, in obvious imitation of Fichte's *Sittenlehre*. He was maintaining, as we have seen, the dignity of the human individual, whose will, identical with the divine Will,

was its own law, whose reason could recognize ultimate truth because it had created it. If we grant, with Fichte himself, that a man tends to be an "idealist" or a "dogmatist," and to emphasize the subjective or the objective element in experience, according as the feeling of self-dependence and activity or that of dependence and passivity has the upper hand, then we may say that Bautain's nervous break-down, by casting him suddenly from a mood of Fichtean self-dependence into a mood of helplessness, in which he groped about pathetically for external aid and light from above, thereby pitched him from idealism into dogmatism, and made it necessary for him to find a new philosophical formula to contrast with the Fichtean formula, and fit his new condition.[3]

Behind the Fichtean ethics and epistemology, and behind the whole philosophy of German Romanticism, there lurks that conception of an irresistible life-force, spontaneously gushing up both in Nature and in man, to which a modern Romanticist has given the name of the *élan vital.* Its ethical corollary, the idea that within the Ego pulsate forces which cannot, ought not, be restrained by any external barrier or external authority, and that the way of life is the way of free self-expression, is a theme that forever recurs in the literature of Romanticism, from Rousseau and Goethe to Stirner and Nietzsche. As a protest against the mechanical conception of Nature, the Romantic conception of Nature as animate and organic appealed strongly to Bautain; and to this extent he always remained a Romanticist; but the ethical consequences of the Romantic conception of the life-force (individualism and moral autonomy) were now revolting to him. And so it came to him as a veritable revelation when Mlle. Humann suggested to him[4] that if he were to study medicine he would discover that life is not "pure activity" at all, but a response to

[3] Cf. Ferraz, 319-320. "It was during his illness that he lost that confidence and pride of life which is the making of independent investigators and philosophers. He fell into that state of prostration and discouragement which the founder of the Society of Jesus demanded of those whom he wished to lead back to religion, and which implies, together with the consciousness of one's own weakness, the need of finding outside of oneself a power and a *point d'appui* which one does not find within. . . . Faith took the place of reason with him; religion, of philosophy."

[4] The idea of "life" appears in the *Cours de Métaphysique* of 1822, written before Bautain had taken up medicine; also in the *Variétés Philosophiques*, 1823. I infer that he got it from Mlle. Humann. His medical studies only amplified and enriched the conception.

external stimuli; that consequently, the subject depends upon the object, and the creature upon the Creator—with the ethical corollary that humility and not pride, submissiveness and not independence, receptive faith and not rationalistic speculation, are appropriate for man in view of his very nature. With this clue in hand, and guided by the conviction that natural law is the same in the ethical and biological realms—that the conditions of life in the physical sense are also the conditions of life in the spiritual sense—Bautain applied himself ardently to the study of anatomy and physiology, and worked out as his doctor's thesis, a series of *Propositions générales sur la vie* which became the basis of his whole philosophy. We shall examine this little book carefully, in view of its fundamental importance.

Bautain begins the main body of his thesis with some propositions "on life in general."[5] Here we see at once the points of contact and contrast between his conception and that of the Romantic school:

> Life [he states] is the active and absolute principle of all that exists; and the principle is known only by its manifestation. Now the manifestation of life is movement, development, creation. It issued from a single *foyer* [center or focal point], from Being, the source of all life, who radiates it out of Himself.[6] It is determined, or posited, in forms, and the posited form is what we call *existence.*

This does not sound very different from the Romantic conception of a life-force, welling up in all creation. But Bautain immediately makes it plain that life, for him, does not well up from below of itself; it must be called forth by stimulation from above, as vegetation is called forth from the fecund earth by the fecundating rays of the sun. The creation of individual entities, as he describes it, is not the result of the self-diversification of a single force, bursting up like molten lava and working against no obstacle but its own solidification;[7] it is the result of a union of two principles, one active and one passive—and *the passive principle is the subjective one.*

[5] Pp. 7-10.

[6] The gender is of course (intentionally) ambiguous in French.

[7] This, I think, is a better simile for the Bergsonian *élan* than the simile of the fountain impeded by its falling drops, for no external force like gravitation enters in to complicate the picture.

If we examine the conditions of the generation of each individual existence, he says, we shall at once perceive that it is the result of the interaction of an "agent in full enjoyment of life" and a "form or capacity of life, a germ analogous to the agent in nature," residing in "an already developed existence, a *forme mère.*" Generalizing, we may say that every existence is the product of a male, objective, or active principle, the universal *life*, and a female, subjective, or passive principle, the universal *being* or substance.

These two principles are found in every living creature, though in diverse proportions. . . . In some, being embraces life, as if to retain it within; in others, life seems to triumph over being and dominate it. This is the basis of sex. The two terms necessary for the production of a third, being types and organs of the two constitutive principles of all existence, are to each other as the principles they represent. One is always relatively active, the other relatively passive.

The passive agent bears "the base, the plasm *(plastique)*," and furnishes a "place" for the generative act; the active agent is "the organ of life and the bearer of all its virtues."

At the instant when passive and active unite, the life-giving ray or the virtue of life reaches the *foyer* of the mother-form and triumphs over its concentration; the conception or intussusception of life takes place. . . .

Objective life is in all the universe the *principe principiant*, or, if you will, the original stimulus, and at the same time the aliment, of every subjective life; and life, one in its essence, gives or communicates itself: *Materially*, through the active or the father in the act of generation; *physically*, through physical light dispersed in the air, and through all the forms and all the agents of nature which serve as its vehicles: it is *intellectually* or mentally communicated through human speech, through the breath and the light of the intelligence, and it is *psychically* transmitted by the Word and the Spirit.[8]

Thus, each individual entity, if we conceive it to be potentially present in the germ from which it is destined to spring, is absolutely dependent upon external aid for admission into the realm of existence. As Bautain puts it elsewhere,

[8] All quotations so far are from pp. 7-9.

each birth, each production, is the result of a struggle, a triumph, of light and life. . . . In all the realm of nature, life is at first enchained in matter, oppressed and as it were stifled by it. The spark does not fly from the pebble unless it is struck. . . . The life of the vegetable is enclosed in the hard shell of the seed. . . . But if the envelope is not broken, the germ remains inert and the life captive. It is the same with animal life: it sleeps in its germ, in the womb of unfecundated matter; fecundation is a liberating act that breaks its chains, tears it out of its inertia, and drags it out of itself.[9]

But though it belongs to the objective principle to take the initiative, life can neither begin nor be maintained unless the subjective principle reacts. The germ must perform the vital act of "radiation, the issuing from itself to respond to the stimulating ray, to seize it and become identical with it." Once this initial reaction has occurred,

the *va-et-vient* of life, its movement in opposite directions within a single form, has begun and will continue through all the duration of that form—the objective life incessantly pouring or plunging itself into the subjective *foyer*, and the latter reacting to it. . . . It is upon the perfect harmony of this double movement in a single form that the duration of that form and the perfection of its life depend; and the preponderance of one or the other of the two principles in their simultaneous act determines the periodic phases of this form in the duration of its existence.[10]

The process of life, says Bautain, is identical in all parts of the universe, in the world as a whole, in the organism as a whole, and in each separate organ; "it is the same in the atom and the organic molecule, the same in heaven and earth."[11] We shall see later how he attempts to apply the laws of life to inorganic nature. The bulk of this thesis, however, is occupied with the study of the life-process as it appears in man.

Even here, "life" is a rather broad concept, for a human being is not a purely physiological entity. "The human personality is a living soul, manifesting itself through an intelligent mind and clothed with an organized body." It includes "(1) the human essence *(être)*; (2) the pure existence of the essence in its mental

[9] *Psych. Exp.*, I, 95-96.
[10] *Props.*, 10.
[11] *Ibid.*

form; and (3) the organic envelope, which is at once the product and the container of the two antecedent terms." This is not to say that man is composed of three independent elements; life in him is one: "It is the life of the soul which manifests itself through the mind and the intelligence, and it is again this life which expresses itself by way of the mind through the organic functions and free movements of the body." The essence, existence, and organism (soul, mind, body) of man are to each other "as center, radius, and sphere, or as point, line, and body. To abstract . . . one or another of these terms is to cut up the idea of man, and not to see him in his unity and his integrity." Hence, in analyzing the development of man's physical life, we are simultaneously studying the development of his mental and spiritual life: "In naming the existence, one implies the essence, since the essence is the absolute condition of the existence; in speaking of the solid, one implies the line and the point, since there is no solid without extremes and without line."

It must not be forgotten that life is, properly speaking, the attribute of the soul or essence of the man. It is this which constitutes the *foyer* or vital center in the egg out of which springs the initial reaction to the life-giving sperm. "The corporeal form appears first to us who are located outside, and who see only the outside of the form;" it develops first, because corporeal stimuli come first. Later comes the awakening of the mind under the influence of mental stimulation in the shape of speech, and last of all the clear awakening of the soul under the influence of the Divine Word.

> It is always the same man, the same soul, the same being, only at such and such a stage in his development. . . . All the forms of our personality, and thus the organic form itself, are therefore the product of the *foyer* of the soul, influenced by life under one or another form; and Stahl was right in saying that it is the soul which made, and at each instant makes, its body.[12]

The unity of the laws of life appears as we consider the progressive stages in the history of a human life: generation, the development of the embryo, the growth of the body and the development

[12] *Props.*, 11-12.

of self-consciousness in childhood, the ripening of physical, mental, and spiritual development in the prime of life, and finally death itself, in which the laws of life find perhaps their clearest exemplification.

(1). *Generation.* Receptivity the fundamental law of life. "Man exists potentially in his father and his mother before being conceived and engendered as a personal existence." Bautain is not a Platonist at this point; each process of generation results in a new existence, a new individual, "destined to enjoy for himself the general heritage of life."

Father and mother are the immediate agents in the creative process, but the ultimate cause of each man's existence is the interaction of the two universal principles, objective Life and subjective Being:

> Whence comes the being or the base of the new human individual? From the mother. And the mother—whence did she receive it? One must necessarily ascend to a first source of all being, to a Being of Beings, to *Him Who Is.* Whence comes the life, the vital spirit, which animates the germ? . . . From the father. But the father—whence did he receive life? One must necessarily ascend from generation to generation, to a primal source of life, a primordial life, to Him who is Life itself and Truth. The mother no more creates the being of the child than the father creates its life; they both communicate what they have received, they posit externally what they bore within them. Generation is but transmission, and that is why the parents are but the depositaries and not the proprietors of their children.[13]

In this, the first stage of the life-process, there appears a fundamental law which holds equally true of all the later stages: the law that life can neither begin nor continue without receptivity; that self-sufficiency and the pretention to autonomy mean sterility and death.

> By the act of fecundation, the life, of which the sperm is the vehicle, penetrates the maternal fluid, and impregnating with its virtue the germ dissolved in the fluid, it works a separation between what receives the fecundation, becomes alive, and is destined to pass into the light, and that which does not receive it and thus remains in inertia and in darkness.

[13] *Ibid.*, 13.

The plastic or alkaline fluid thus impregnated becomes mother-water, and this water holds in solution, mutually embraced, being and life, plasm and spirit, germ and sperm, or again alkali and acid.[14]

The ethical and theological analogies which Bautain here has in mind should be sufficiently plain to the reader. If man is to obey the laws of life, his attitude must be one of humility and faith, not pride and skepticism. What may not be so evident is the fact that, in the last sentence quoted, a thorough-going Panpsychism is implied. The position is taken that the laws of the organic world govern the inorganic world as well, without serious alteration: the reaction of an alkali to an acid is identical with that of a living germ to a living sperm. We shall return later to this important point.

(2). *Development of the embryo.* Materialization of the vital principle by a process of polarization. Sex.

The human embryo, according to Bautain, originates in what he calls (by analogy with the process of crystallization) a "saline point" in the fecundated bubble of mother-water. This original saline point is "one, simple, indestructible, without dimensions" like the mathematical point.[15] It becomes visible through a process of precipitation: a part of the mother-water being drawn to the circumference of the egg and evaporated, the remainder becomes super-saturated, and precipitates itself at the saline point. Then, under the influence of "the objective life which penetrates it through the maternal form," the saline point becomes a "salient point" *(punctum saliens)*, and "spurts up" toward the objective life-force which stimulates it, while at the same time "the center of the mother-form attracts to itself the vital spirit by a reaction equal to the action of the superior life which draws it on high."[16]

Here appears for the first time the great law of *polarization.* Every living thing has its center of indifference, and its axis with two poles, one directed toward the stimulating life-force, the other toward the mother-form. In the seedling, they appear as seed, plantule, and radicule; in the human embryo, as heart, head, and abdomen, connected by an invisible axis whose visible "image" is

[14] *Props.*, 17.
[15] *Ibid.*, 18-19.
[16] *Ibid.*, 20.

the backbone. This axis, says Bautain, is the first realization of the living center, the first expression of its potentiality; and it is around that axis that all the organs are to be grouped. Through it the *vital process* will set in, in the organism.[17] Next, the process of polarization begins in a direction at right angles to the original axis; the direction of the *diameter* is marked out. Intersecting, the axis and diameter give the four right angles or the cross, the necessary foundation of every existence.

> Life in all realms [concludes Bautain] is organized by the universal law of polarization. An existence, whatever it may be, always issues originally from a center or *foyer*, which bears within it the potentiality of its development. When this center is fecundated or stimulated to issue from itself, it radiates and tends to posit externally the sphere of its vitality or its living form.[18]

Bautain seems to have watched the initial stages of embryonic development with the most intense interest; for there, before his eyes, the invisible vital principle was beginning to spin itself a body as a spider spins its web:

> First a reddish point appears in the center of the embryo, and from that point emanate rays, reddish also, in all directions; the beatings and pulsations which can already be noticed leave no doubt but that the central point is the heart, and its rays the blood-vessels. At about the end of the first month, the head outlines itself, very large at first in comparison with the rest of the body, and in the head appear two black points which are the eyes.[19]

The vital impulse thus gradually materializes itself, taking on first a liquid, then a solid form. The blood is the primal source of the whole organism; it "contains within it," says Bautain, "the plasm of the future organs, and, through it, this plasm is to be determined and organized.[20] The blood-vessels develop out of the blood by "coagulation." They represent "the first paths which the subjective life traced for itself, and which, materialized by the plastic capacity, have become arteries and veins."[21] The nerves later develop out of the nervous fluid by a similar process of "congelation." As

[17] *Ibid.*, 17.
[18] *Psych. Exp.*, I, 303.
[19] *Ibid.*
[20] *Props.*, 35.
[21] *Ibid.*, 37.

for the chief organs of the body, they develop out of the blood by a regular application of the law of polarization. The heart is the *foyer* of the whole organism. Its upper, active, or "north" pole is the brain, which is the product of the most volatile part of the blood, "the animal spirit itself coagulated and fixed." (Its "south" pole is found in the abdomen.) The brain, once posited, begins to polarize itself in its turn: its *foyer* is the *medulla oblongata;* its north pole appears in the organs of sight; its south pole, or root, is the spinal cord, from which the rootlets of the nervous system spring forth; its diameters, finally, are the ears.

The *order* of embryonic development is of the utmost significance to Bautain. That which appears later, he feels, must always be considered the tool or instrument of that which has already appeared; and, in general, a pole is always the servant of its *foyer,* while the north pole of the axis stands higher in "hierarchical dignity" than the south pole, and the poles of the diameter, though equal to each other, are more "passive" than either of the poles of the axis. According to this principle, not only is the body as a whole the instrument of the vital principle, but the parts of the body (together with the corresponding faculties of the soul) stand in an instrumental relation one to another. The heart and the circulatory system appear first of all; the brain and the nervous system appear to develop from the heart by a process of polarization. This means that the brain is an instrument or weapon thrown out, as it were, by the heart and the vital principle in their effort to express themselves and find their way in a material environment. The epistemological corollary is obvious: intellection, which corresponds to the brain and nervous system, is less fundamental than volition and emotion, which correspond to the heart and circulatory system; therefore the will gets us in touch with reality in a more fundamental way than does its tool, the intellect. Truly, Pascal was right in asserting that "the heart has reasons that the reason knows not of"! According to the same principle, the senses are to be regarded as the mere tools of the brain and the intellect, thrown out in the effort to know; and those senses which develop earliest (the sense of sight, for instance) have a greater hierarchical dignity than those which develop later.

All this—substituting ontogenesis for phylogenesis—sounds sur-

prisingly like Bergson. In Bautain, as in Bergson, we have a "descent of spirit into matter," a self-materialization of spirit. Bergson might well borrow Bautain's phraseology, and speak of matter as "coagulated" spirit; Bautain would have been grateful for Bergson's word "canalization" to describe the process by which the *élan vital* carves its way through its own coagulated mass, and so makes itself blood vessels, nerves, etc. The eye evolves as a result of the impulse to see; the brain evolves as a tool of the life-principle, and a tool of secondary importance, at that: so both Bergson and Bautain would say. There is an important difference, however, as we have already pointed out: for Bergson and the Romanticists in general, life evolves spontaneously and "from below," while for Bautain its spontaneity is only potential, and is conditioned strictly by external stimuli which, as it were, draw it out from above. For Bergson, life gushes up like a natural geyser, unsolicited. For Bautain, it "spurts up," like a rocket, in quite a Bergsonian fashion; but the *touching-off* of the rocket is an absolutely essential part of the picture.

In the case of embryonic development, this external solicitation is far from evident. It looks as though the process were proceeding under its own steam, without any aid from an external life-force. This is an illusion, however, according to Bautain; the stimulus of the "objective life" is as essential to the development of the embryo as is the stimulus of sunlight to the development of the seed before it bursts through the soil; but in both cases the stimulus is transmitted—in the case of the embryo, through the mother, who "attenuates the objective action, too strong for the frail constitution of her fruit." It is also through her, he adds, that the embryo "reacts toward the objective life."[22]

Already in the embryonic stage the first "specific determination" of the coming individuality has become evident: sex. "Sex," says Bautain, "is the expression of a disproportion between the form[23] and the life in the same individual."[24] Femininity is form that is alive, but not saturated with life, and hence craves saturation. Masculinity is superabundance of life, in too restricted a form,

[22] *Props.*, 26-27.
[23] Form *vs.* life = being *vs.* life.
[24] *Props.*, 23.

and hence seeks to communicate itself. Woman is +soul,—mind, +body; man is —soul,+mind,—body.

> Man is in general more active than passive; he feels less keenly, less deeply, less centrally than woman. His will is much more apt to posit itself externally with a view to dominate, than to retire within itself *(se recueillir)* in order to enjoy; he is in all his personality more expressive than impressionable.[25]

The significance of sex for Bautain is very profound; with Plato[26] and Freud, he is willing to say that sex-need is

> the source of all human activity, whatever its object or its form may be, whether the man or woman, according to the degree of his development feels more particularly what he lacks in the soul, in the mind, or in the body, and whether he seeks it in a psychical, intellectual, or physical manner.[27]

Feeling the need of what he lacks before he is able to *know* it, the individual bestirs himself to find it. "Hence the uneasiness which troubles the human being from his mother's womb, which leads him to detach himself from her, and seek outside that which will complete and harmonize him in his nature.[28] The ultimate meaning of sex-need is spiritual, since the sexes only imperfectly symbolize the two universal principles of Being and Life:

> It is for humanity in its present state the need of the objective universal Life. It is, in the soul, soul-hunger, desire for life. It is, in the mind, mental thirst, need of light, knowledge, the word, instruction.[29]

Bautain does not specifically call the principles of Life and Being the Male and Female principles of the universe; but some of his disciples did not hesitate to do so. In a manuscript of the Abbé Carl which I found[30] at Juilly, there occurs in the midst of endless Cabalistic and Neo-Pythagorean computations the following curious bit of speculation:

[25] *Props.*, 25.
[26] He refers specifically (p. 25) to Aristophanes' speech in the *Symposium*.
[27] *Props.*, 25.
[28] *Ibid.*, 24.
[29] *Ibid.*, 24-25.
[30] With the aid of M. l'Abbé Laberthonnière and M. le supérieur Sabatier, whom I have to thank for a very pleasant day spent at the old school.

Mary is the first passive, the passive *par excellence*, the universal passive.

From this point of view she is the relative 1, as God the Father is the absolute 1 in the active order.

This relative 1 *gives birth* to God the Word *(le Verbe-Dieu)* as the absolute 1 *engenders* God the Word.

It is 2 under this aspect, and from its union with the fruit of its womb issue all the gifts which the Holy Spirit pours out upon the creatures. The Word is its source; Mary is its dispenser.

Mary thus has for her number 1+2+3=6; and by the very fact that Mary is the reflection of the Most Holy Trinity, she is the ideal of the whole creation, and every regular ternary reproduces the 6 which gives it birth.

3x4: the creation in its relation to deity=12.—6x4: the creation in its relation to Mary=24. Two apocalyptic numbers.

I would not have the reader take this as a typical excerpt from the writings of the "Strasbourg school." The Abbé Carl was a gentle and lovable soul, not notable for intellectual vigor. Still, he reflects tendencies which can be found in Bautain—Pythagorean tendencies, and above all the tendency to universalize the sex-principle. For this latter tendency he was much criticized; in fact, he was accused of downright indecency. "What, after all," cries Bautain's Mennaisian opponent, "is a philosophy where it is continually a question of gestation, embryo, and *accouchement*, and where nothing can be accomplished without the aid of the mid-wife!"[31] Bautain answered to one of these critics, reasonably enough, that young men are bound to learn the facts of sex in one way or another, and had best do so in a serious and scientific atmosphere: "Is it not better to explain all that to them scientifically, and . . . obtain a double advantage: on the one hand, enlighten their intelligence by deepening their knowledge of the facts of nature, and on the other hand, associate the memory of these things in their minds with serious thoughts, having something solemn about them?"[32] Bautain was nothing if he was not a profound psychologist and a skillful educator.

(3). *Childhood.* The chief organic functions in their relation to the organism and to the life-process in general.

[31] *De l'enseignement philosophique de M. l'Abbé Bautain*, 644. *(Ens. Phil. B.)*

[32] Letter to the Abbé Mougenot, FB,K, *Cahier* I, 11-12.

The child is primarily a little animal; so the study of his development is, in the main, simply the study of the development of the main organic functions. In this chapter, accordingly, we find the clearest biological formulae for the life-process in general:

> Life is one in the universe; it is the objective, universal Life; it is one in each creature, one in its activity, which is a simultaneous exit and entrance; and all the vital functions are but *brisements*, refracted rays of this activity. Man lives only by intus-susception of the life which surrounds and penetrates him, and by ex-position, emission or radiation of the life he receives and has received. In other terms, man lives, in his soul, in his mind and in his body by subjectivating the objective and by objectivating the subjective.[33]
>
> The vital act or process has its explanation in the identification of the two principles which constitute the individuality, the indivisible duality, of each existence. . . . This double tendency realizes itself in two movements in inverse direction which occur simultaneously. . . . To live is, for the creature, to be stimulated by life; it is to receive it, . . . react simultaneously toward it; then emit it, transmit it to other forms, exchange it continually for new inspirations and communications of life.[34]

The only difference between the process as it appears in the embryo and in the child is that the stimulating and self-imparting activity of the universal Life reaches the child directly in air, light, and food, and no longer by the mediation of the mother. Intellectually and spiritually, however, he still needs mediators.

All the organic functions reveal the same life-process. *Nutrition* is first stimulation, then assimilation; then appears "the need of opposing functions and movements by which the organism or a given organ tends to discharge itself, project outwardly from itself either the superabundance of what has been introduced into it, or the dross of the assimilative process."[35] *Reproduction* begins with the discharge of the surplus life of the male and its reception by the female; "and later must she not reject and expel that which she has received and absorbed?"[36] Finally, the general function of *relation (rapport)*, which includes all the various reactions of the organism to the environment, is obviously a process of *va-et-vient* between us and the beings which surround us. It is first "a relation of those beings to us, whereby they act upon us"; then "we

[33] *Props.*, 32-33. [34] *Ibid.*, 32. [35] *Ibid.* [36] *Ibid.*

receive in our sensitive center their impressions and assimilate them by our sensations, our conceptions"; finally it appears as "our relation to the external beings, whereby we react towards them, and dominate them in our turn by the power of our will, our mind, our senses, and our organs."[37]

The same process appears in each organ, and the organism as a whole. It appears in "the systole and diastole of the heart," in "nervous eradiation and inradiation," in the "secretion and excretion of the glands," in the "extension and contraction of the muscles." Everything, "even to the expansion and concentration of the least organic molecule," reveals "this double movement by which life is simultaneously received and restored."[38] The intellectual and moral life proceeds on this plan. The whole organism in short

> is a single system, existing in its form by virtue of a single center, for a single end, and in which each part is in the service of the whole, the whole for the well-being of each part, and parts and whole together for the life. Each organ is hence a functionary, either principal or subordinate, of the life, and the principal of these functionaries of the vital activity are, in the child, the heart with the lungs, the brain with the organs of the senses, and the stomach.[39]

The rest of the chapter is devoted to the description of the evolution of these specific functionaries and the determination of their rank in the organism. It may be summed up by saying that Bautain reproduces the Platonic tripartite psychology, *reversing the rank of the brain and the heart, which correspond to the reason and "the spirited part."*

(4). *Prime of life.* Intellectual and spiritual development, and spiritual health. Physical, intellectual, and spiritual reproduction.

As the foetus is carried within the mother, so the embryonic mind of the child is carried within the body, which is its "container," its "living but dark prison,"[40] through which it is impressed and expresses itself, as the foetus does through the mother. The

[37] *Ibid.*
[38] *Ibid.*, 32-33.
[39] *Ibid.*, 34.
[40] *Ibid.*, 47.

mind is conceived within the womb of the body when language, the vehicle of thought, carries the thought of some other human being to the "form of the understanding" in the child.[41]

> The spiritual germ of this new conception is incorporated in the brain of the child, . . . and the life, the generating ray which must fecundate the germ, will come to him through a human agent, speaking the *Verbum*, the word of the intelligence. . . . As soon as the child has conceived the sense of the verb, that of the substantive verb *To Be*, the mental personality of the child is settled in his corporeal form; mental conception is accomplished.[42]

We have here an almost magical conception of the function of language, and of the verb *to be* in particular, which nevertheless is simply a way of emphasizing the fact that mind and self-consciousness develop only in society and by social intercourse. Once conceived, says Bautain, mental man needs the *word* to sustain his mental existence as much as physical man needs bread. The complete acquisition of language leads to the positing of the *self*. The child "will enter by speech and by intelligence into commerce . . . with other intelligent and speaking beings, and thus learn not only to distinguish his Ego from the non-Egos which surround him, but also to know this Ego, and know himself in his speech."[43]

But still a third conception and gestation are necessary ere the whole man is born:

> Man who is soul, mind, and body, does not exist merely to live in his body and for his body, nor in his body and his mind for himself and his fellows. He must also live in his soul for the sake of the Being who is the first source of life and of all life, and to whom finally all life must be given back. . . . The germ is provided by the soul itself, by the radical base of every man, already alive in his body and his mind. The pure life which is destined to penetrate this germ and fecundate it, will either come from the life-giving Spirit itself which "bloweth where it listeth" . . . or by the word of life announced to man by the ministry of one of his fellows, who himself received the word from the Spirit and lives by Its life.[44]

Such a minister of the word is rightly called "Father"; without his

[41] *Props.*, 35.
[42] *Ibid.*, 47.
[43] *Ibid.*, 48.
[44] *Ibid.*, 49-50.

fecundating word, the capacity for spiritual development may remain sterile, "as the egg would never have developed apart from fecundation, nor the mind apart from speech."[45]

Relationship with the Universal Life having once been established, it must become a constant commerce if spiritual health is to be maintained. As the health of the *foetus* depends upon its union with the mother, as that of the mind depends upon constant communication with other minds, so the soul's health depends upon the maintenance of a right relationship with the Source of its life.

> And [he adds], if it is she, the soul, who makes her mind and her body, if she makes and remakes them at every instant, and always as a function of *(en raison de)* that which stimulates or acts upon her, shall she not communicate to the mind and to the body what she is, her well-being or her ill-being? And, if she can be touched, stimulated by pure Life, be fecundated by It and react toward It, shall she not communicate the virtue of that Life to her mind and to her body?[46]

Bautain, it will be noted, is a firm believer in mental healing. As he says later, "It is above all the mental and moral factor which makes for what doctors call resiliency *(le ressort)* and which they so like to find in patients."[47] On the other hand, the "*malade imaginaire*" proves that the influence of mind over body may be harmful as well as helpful. The spiritual man, however, is kept in health "by the very fact that he lives in the bottom of his being and in the whole of his being, that he is in triple relationship with objective Life and draws his life from the purest source."[48]

Bautain's doctrine of the three conceptions culminates in a parallel between the men of the spirit, the men of the mind, and the men of the body:

> These [he cries] are the men who, arrived at the autumn of their earthly life, present in their person and their physiognomy that dignity, that beauty of ripeness and old age which inspires at once trust and respect, love and veneration. The man who has lived more by his mind and reason than by his soul, when he becomes old and infirm is irritable, uneasy, impatient, regretting and praising the days that are gone, discontented with what surrounds him; he inspires fear or compassion,

[45] *Ibid.*, 50.
[46] *Ibid.*, 49.
[47] *Ibid.*, 58.
[48] *Ibid.*, 59-60.

rather than respect or love. The animal man, old and broken, is a collapsed machine, out of gear, who lies in a corner, moans, and is dumb. He inspires pity and disgust.[49]

But before passing to the subject of old age and death, Bautain devotes a few pages to the phenomenon of reproduction, characteristic of the prime of life. In childhood, he says, sex-need shows itself in "the tendency of each human individuality to seek and grasp what it lacks."[50] But at adolescence man becomes specifically conscious of what he lacks. His life is then superabundant at both poles, brain and abdomen. Reproduction seems like a purely physical process, but it should be remarked that the seminal fluid has, besides its primary function, the secondary function "to flow back also into the interior, pour itself into the blood, impregnating it with its own virtues," and so to produce various secondary modifications, not least of which is the stimulation of intellectual creativity, or intellectual reproduction. "This work of intellectual conception, parturition, and reproduction, is an excellent derivative which, attracting life to the superior pole, and consuming it in ideal products, enfeebles the animal tendency."[51] Intense physical activity is another means of sex sublimation; but religion is best, for it develops the will, and "leads it to exercise its legitimate superiority over the imagination and the senses, while at the same time it gives man's desire an ascending direction, and sets before his affection a superior object."[52] Bautain is not over-ascetic; he sets a very high estimate on marriage, when both parties are spiritual. It is from these "free and chosen unions," he says, "between two human creatures animated in all their nature, each alive in all the elements of his existence, that the noblest offspring comes"[53]—for he is inclined to believe that in the union of egg and sperm the whole nature of each parent, moral and mental as well as physical, fuses with that of the other.

### (5). *Decay and death.*

What is death? [asks Bautain]. It is in general the breaking of the relation between a subjective and particular center and form, and an

[49] *Props.*, 60.
[50] *Ibid.*, 57.
[51] *Ibid.*
[52] *Ibid.*
[53] *Ibid.*, 53.

objective and general center and form. . . . To die is not therefore to cease absolutely to live, still less, to cease to be; it is simply not to respond any more to a given stimulus, not to react any more to a given agent. . . . Human life does not die in death, any more than it is engendered by generation.[54]

Natural death like childbirth is in its outcome a triumph of life. Death like birth is for man the exit from one world and the entrance into another; it is also an awakening from a sympathetic slumber, a dream, the ceasing to *feel* in common with and by the body, the loosing of the bonds that the body imposed on the spirit, the commencement of an immediate contact with a purer air, a purer light, and purer objects.[55]

The whole process of human development may thus be summarized as follows:

In the physical birth of man, the physical life, implanted in the human germ by the father, issues victorious under a material and physical form from a living and dark tomb, the mother's womb.

In mental, intellectual birth, the purer life implanted in the brain and the understanding by the light and the word, issues victorious under an intellectual form from a living and illumined tomb, from the brain and the understanding.

In psychic birth, the soul's life, poured into her by the breath of the Spirit and the virtue of the sacred Word, issues victorious under a pure and *animic* form from the very bosom of the human being, circumscribed by the mind and imprisoned in the body.

Finally in man's legitimate rebirth through natural decease, in which death is to be really conquered by death, the psychic and intellectual life issues triumphant under the human form from the earthly form it had put on and which it leaves behind, to react henceforth more purely to the intelligible Light and the universal Life.[56]

Here, then, in Bautain's idea of life, we have the "mother-idea" of his system. Concerning its centrality in his thinking we have the testimony of his anonymous Mennaisian opponent:

German philosophy,[57] comparing phenomena and forcing the meaning of words, reduces to a single law the law under which God has provided for the perpetuation of species in the organic world and the law which presides over intellectual conception. M. Bautain makes it a universal

[54] *Ibid.*, 55-56.
[55] *Ibid.*, 60-61.
[56] *Ibid.*, 61-62.
[57] The reference is to articles on and by Franz Baader in the *Revue Européenne*, I, 71 and 298; II, 192 and 338; III, 65 and 182; and especially IX, 182 *et seq.*

law covering all existences, from the product of an arithmetical multiplication up to the conclusion of a syllogism, from the salt which crystallizes in the chemist's vessel and the mineral which is formed in the bowels of the earth up to God, the prototype and archetype of all beings. All existence starting from a primitively existing point, two terms engendering a third, two factors engendering a product: that is the germinative point of our philosopher's science, the foundation of all his teaching, the usual theme of his lectures, the text upon which his course is a perpetual commentary.[58]

"Life, one in itself, one in all the universe"—such is the idea that one must first grasp, if one is to comprehend Bautain's philosophy as a whole. That we may clearly understand the absolutely universal scope of this concept, it is important to stress the fact that it is meant to cover not only the realm of mind, and the realm of animate nature, but the realm of the "inanimate" and "inorganic," as well.

There is in the *Propositions sur la vie* a remarkable note[59] on the analogy between the process of generation and the process of crystallization, which I have reserved for special discussion. It is apropos of the expression "saline point" as applied to the invisible point about which the embryo forms itself:

I call the center of the human embryo a saline point, and I would willingly call the central point of the crystallization of a salt a mineral embryo. Perhaps we shall some day recognize that the formation of salts and minerals, and beings called inorganic, occurs according to the same law as the reproduction of beings called organic, and to which alone we ascribe life, because we there see it manifest itself beneath phenomena more adapted to our manner of existence. How many centuries went by before the sex of plants, their marriage, their fecundation, their conception, were established? Analogies will perhaps lead some day to the same result for the beings of the mineral kingdom.

The basis of every natural mineral is a salt, and every salt is an alkali or plastic form, more or less saturated by an acid. . . . All the particles of the acid impregnate all the molecules of the alkali or otherwise all the unities of the multiplier act upon all the unities of the multiplicand, and from this operation results a product. . . .

How does this growth of the mineral embryo take place? Is it perfectly sure that it is by juxtaposition or aggregation? Might it not also be by intussusception, by digestion and transformation, as in the other

[58] *Ens. Phil. B.*, 568.

[59] *Props.*, 18-19, note 5.

reigns of nature? May not the center of the salt absorb and assimilate the nourishment floating in the *eau-mère* by a mode of nutrition peculiar to itself, and afterwards develop from within out what it has assimilated? . . . If these masses are the product of aggregation, . . . why does one molecule become the center rather than another? Why should it attract instead of being attracted?—for they are all under the same conditions in the midst of the *eau-mère*. . . .

I simply set forth analogies which may help us to get an inkling of the identity of the laws of reproduction in all the realms, in spite of the difference of forms, instruments, and means. When we call the mineral kingdom dead and inorganic, we mean, without doubt, that it does not live after our fashion; that it does not feel and act like us, by organs like ours. It remains to say what *to feel* and *to act* are, and if they cannot take place where we see neither nerves nor muscles, nor fibres, nor anything that resembles them.

This daring extension of the concept of life to inorganic nature was the chief object of attack on the part of Bautain's examiners when he defended his thesis before the Faculty of Medecine. We fortunately have a most interesting document to enlighten us on the details of this dramatic confrontation of Philosophy and Science: a tiny anonymous pamphlet[60] issued by one of Bautain's admirers after the much-discussed examination. Bautain, it appears, was "like Socrates, unable to reply to his judges"; and his anonymous admirer feels called upon to dispel the somewhat painful impression thus created.

A single word [he says] . . . seems to us to explain everything; that is, that the Faculty and M. Bautain had not taken their stand upon the same ground: one party was on the ground of the physicists, the other on that of the philosophers. . . . These sciences depend upon philosophical doctrines quite different from his own. . . . M. Bautain said it himself in a notable way in his replies: he did not concern himself with justifying or refuting . . . the physical and physiological doctrines of our day. He contented himself with showing the analogies of physical life with all life, and thus the simple *probabilities* with which present-day physics or chemistry furnish us; as for example [here is a reference to the principal objection of the examiners] the fact that the metals have not been decomposed up to the present moment can be no obstacle to the presentation of such analogies.

[60] *Un Mot sur la soutenance de M. Bautain*, Strasbourg, 1826.

Bautain would have been delighted with the modern theory of positive and negative electrons, and the decomposition of elements in radioactivity!

In Cosmology, then, Bautain is a pronounced panpsychist—or at the very least, a *panvitalist*. All things are animate, and animistic terms are appropriate in describing them. Do the chemical atoms "attract" and "repel" each other? Bautain suspects that something quasipsychological is involved in the process, and speaks of "affinity" and "antipathy." Do table-tipping and table-tapping astound the public? Bautain is not surprised. After attending a few *séances*, he comes to the conclusion that, although these phenomena have a certain similarity to those associated with "animal magnetism," "artificial somnambulism," and "the peculiar motives which in certain cases impel us to decide and act almost without our knowledge and, as it were, in spite of ourselves," they are more probably just what they appear to be: "intellectual phenomena in inorganic beings." This, he feels, should give the final blow to materialism and naturalism![61] We should note, however, that Bautain's panpsychism, unlike Paulsen's, is not a corollary of a parallelistic theory of body and mind. Bautain is a thorough-going interactionist. If he looks upon the body as in some sense the creation of the vital principle, he nevertheless believes in a sharp dualism of soul and body. If he at times reminds us of the monism of "*L'Évolution Créatrice*," he also at times reminds us of the dualism of "*Matière et Mémoire*." Of this, more anon.

We now have in our possession, in the shape of the idea of *life*, the key which will enable us to understand and almost to predict the views of our philosopher on every imaginable subject. But the forms which this identical formula assumes in passing from one realm of science to another are so protean, and sometimes so unexpected, that we shall do well to become acquainted not only with the *idée-mère* itself, but also with the four great *idées-filles* (if we may coin the word) which stand just below it in hierarchical order, and which act in their turn as *idées-mères* for the four divisions of Bautain's philosophy. I refer to the idea of God (or *Being*),

[61] Bautain was one of the first to take an interest in spiritualistic phenomena when the craze struck Paris, about 1850. He published his conclusions in a little pamphlet entitled: *Avis aux chrétiens sur les tables tournantes et parlantes, par un ecclésiastique*, Paris, Devarenne et Perrisse, 1853.

the generative principle of Ontology; the idea of *Nature*, the generative principle of Cosmology; the idea of *Man*, the generative principle of Anthropology; and the idea of *rapport*, which acts as generative principle for all other branches of philosophy, which Bautain classes under Anthropology because they deal with man in his various theoretical and practical *relations*. The exposition of these four generative ideas will therefore give us the ground-plan of his entire system. Since we have already been introduced to Bautain's cosmology, we shall begin with the idea of Nature and take our leap thence into the high mysteries of Being in Itself, returning soon, to avoid dizziness, to the level of the humanistic sciences.

1. *The idea of Nature.* The "nature" of an object as equivalent to its Platonic *eidos*. Nature and spirit.

There are two chief conceptions of nature, says Bautain: "For the more superficial, nature is the visible form of the world and of each being; for the more profound, it is the creative force that animates them."[62] Neither of these two conceptions wholly satisfies him, however; for neither tells us what nature is "in itself, in its idea." Modern physics is powerless to help us here. It talks much about "forces," "affinities," etc., but it is obliged to take all these fundamental concepts on faith as *faits primitifs*, "facts quite as mysterious as the hooks on the atoms of Epicurus or the occult qualities of the Middle Ages."[63] If Philosophy suspends judgment until Science settles such questions, she will remain forever in suspense; for Science in our days has turned her attention from these high questions, and has become "the servant of the body and the servant of industry."[64] Bautain therefore goes back to a more daring and less abjectly scientific philosophy, and finds in the Platonic theory of ideas the clue to the *nature of nature*.

We know no object as it is in itself, he remarks; yet in the subjective impression which it leaves upon us—an impression conditioned by "its constitution and organization, its situation and ours, and the intervening media"[65]—we have a genuine product of the object itself. If therefore we eliminate from our impression of

[62] *Psych. Exp.*, I, 128.
[63] *Ibid.*, 129.
[64] *Ibid.*, 131.
[65] *Ibid.*, 132-133.

various objects all that is accidental and adventitious, we shall find that our idea of each object is composed of three main factors: an idea of its individuality; an idea of its substance, form, or generic qualities; and an idea of its animating life-force or spirit. It is the second of these ideas to which we refer when we speak of the *nature* of the object.

But [he continues] if the idea of a single form, substantial and peculiar to the genus of the object, is the basis of its image in my mind, as the prototype of this idea is the basis of the object which exists outside of me; if I conceive nothing in any existence which can be anterior to that basis; if it is this *plasm (plastique)* of the object which constitutes its generic characteristic, the support of its properties, the substratum of its qualities, it will also be true to say that it is this, and not the palpable, visible material, which constitutes the substance beneath the accident, the *noumenon* beneath the phenomenon. The plasm of each being is its *extreme inwardness*, the fixed, stable, indestructible substance; and the *extreme outwardness* is the phenomenon which varies, the form which perishes. This *plasm*, the same in all individuals of the same genus, and in which the need of life is inherent—as in every germ, in every created form—this central force which so powerfully attracts the spirit of life and which is the root from which the existence develops, is what constitutes the *nature* of the thing. Physical nature, be it general or particular, is therefore, in each creature, the pure form of the physical life, or the capacity to attract it and receive it, joined with the power of reacting towards it.[66]

The world as it appears to us is therefore not Nature itself, but Nature's appearance, "the child of Nature by the Spirit which animates it, by the life which fecundates it, . . . Nature objectivated or made manifest."[67] This implies that the "nature" of each reality is found in two different states. In the first, it is "latent, like an unlit hearth, . . . inert, motionless, fixed; it is chained within itself, as if swallowed up in its own depths."[68] In the second state, which ensues only upon stimulation or fecundation by some external life-force, it is active and actual.

The inward makes a motion to advance, progresses, passes outward; . . . substance manifests itself as qualities, the *noumenon* as phenomenon. Nature then shows herself as a form which conceives, travails, brings

[66] *Psych. Exp.*, I, 134-135.
[67] *Ibid.*, 135.
[68] *Ibid.*, 136.

forth, and nourishes; as *plasm*, as mother, *natura naturans*, and she tends with all her strength . . . on the one hand to attract the food which she needs to sustain what she bears . . . and on the other hand she posits it more and more outwardly, pushes it ever farther on toward birth, toward the plenitude of development, to the end that . . . her potentiality may be wholly manifested and pass into actuality.[69]

If, now, we ask which of these two states represents the nature of the object more truly, we shall have to answer that it is freest from chance, change, and corruption in the latent state, where it exists timelessly and invisibly. In this invisible realm of latency subsists eternally the "divine idea" of every manner of creature, "the final cause of their creation and their existence." For each possible genus and species there is an idea, which unites all the members of the species in an organism "in the likeness of the divine Tri-unity." Each individual creature has therefore a "general life whereby he communicates with his generating principle and with his genus," and also a "particular life, which manifests in its own way the general life with which he is animated, which realizes . . . the divine idea of which he is the more or less distant expression—for the succession of the generations is the development of the idea of the Creator in the world, through Nature!"[70] In this teaching of Bautain's, Platonic and Aristotelian elements are mingled in a most interesting fashion with elements drawn from current Romanticism.

But what is this external force—this "life" or "spirit"—which calls realities from potentiality into actuality? What is *spirit?* Here is an idea which seems to be implied in the idea of nature, as one of its necessary ingredients. Until we understand what spirit is, we have not fully understood what nature is.

Bautain feels that Descartes' definition of spirit as *res cogitans* has proved its absurdity by the consequences which have been deduced from it, chief of which is the conclusion that animals are machines. "Experience and common sense," says Bautain, " . . . force us to recognize in animals a life analogous to man's, though of an inferior degree, and consequently an animal *spirit* which animates and moves their organism, although without consciousness

[69] *Ibid.*, 136-137. [70] *Ibid.*, 138.

and reflection."[71] As we have seen, he is disposed to extend the concept beyond the animal world to the inanimate world. This he justifies by the remark that the qualities by which the empirical school is wont to distinguish matter from spirit—extension, weight, form, color, etc.—may quite possibly be purely phenomenal expressions of hidden causes; and these causes might well be spiritual, as was urged by the Occasionalists.

In place of Descartes' definition of spirit, Bautain puts the following: "the first product of a nature, the immediate result of the action which fecundates it and its emergence from itself, its outward positing, its ex-position."[72] If we call latent nature *substance*, we may call active nature *spirit*. They correspond to being and existence, plasm and life, germ and sperm, base and acid. Spirit is volatile, like gas; though attached to its parent substance during life, it "easily passes from one object to another, and thus is variously modified."[73] So long as its substance remains in vital relation with the superior life which is its source and nutriment, the spirit remains attached to the parent stem; when this relation is broken, nothing perishes. "The spirit persists and goes seeking a new base and a new form. The substance is indestructible, and it awaits another fecundation, whence will issue a new spirit."[74] The organic molecules remain, to be worked up into new organisms by new spirits. Spirit, finally, is the intermediary whereby substances communicate with one another. Substances are impenetrable monads; they "can no more penetrate than centers can; they touch each other only by their spirit, by their form, as centers do by their radii, by their circumferences."[75] Spirits, on the other hand, are capable of uniting with one another in more or less stable unions; they "interpenetrate with one another, and like rays of light they meet and pass through one another without becoming alloyed."[76]

There are in the universe two kinds of spirits, corresponding to

[71] *Psych. Exp.*, I, 141.

[72] *Ibid.*, 147-148.

[73] *Ibid.*, 155. "Hence the immense diversity of spirits, each being a function of the base or the substance from which it issues, the fecundating agent which develops it, and finally, of all the circumstances (and they are innumerable) which may influence and modify its development." *Ibid.*, 166.

[74] *Ibid.*, 168-169.

[75] *Ibid.*, 175.

[76] *Ibid.*, 177.

the two great classes of substances: heavenly and earthly, spiritual and material, psychical and physical. Animals, vegetables, and minerals are purely terrestrial spirits. To this class belongs the Earth, our great mother. Like Fechner, Bautain believes in the existence of an Earth-Spirit, child of Mother Earth, fecundated by the life-giving rays of the sun. From the Earth-Spirit is derived the physical life of all earth's creatures.[77] To the class of purely heavenly spirits belong the angels, first creation of deity, nourished by the divine Life itself. To the class of "mixed" spirits, half of earth and half of heaven, half intelligent and half physical, belong the World-Spirit or Macrocosm, and man, the microcosm, each of them an organism in which spirit and matter, soul and body, are strangely blended.

> The worlds [concludes Bautain] are attached to one another by the transmission of spirit: the divine world to the world of the intelligences by the divine Spirit, the intelligible world to the terrestrial world by the psychic spirit, the human spirit, acting upon the physical spirit and through it upon matter, whatever the form and degree of its organization may be. And spirit everywhere is life; it is the movement of alternation by which it operates; it is therefore by life, and by it alone, that substances may be penetrated: it is life which opens them, fecundates them, develops them, and it is by life again that they communicate with each other.[78]

2. *The idea of Being, or God.* The Trinity. Origin of the world of time and space. The problem of evil and the problem of redemption.

As, in the created universe, each substance issues from an invisible center, and makes itself a visible form by the great law of polarization, so in the realm of ultimate reality, the realm of the divine, the same law holds good; or rather, the laws which govern the created universe are more or less inexact copies of the law according to which the three persons of the Godhead are eternally generated out of the indivisible One. For Bautain, as for Hegel, the Doctrine of the Trinity is the central Christian doctrine. He explains its meaning in various ways, recognizing that no one

[77] See the pamphlet, *Un mot sur la soutenance de M. Bautain*, already cited. Cf. *Psych. Exp.*, I, 85-86. On the "World Spirit," see *Psych. Exp.*, I, 185-186.

[78] *Psych. Exp.* I, 177.

terrestrial analogy can possibly exhaust its celestial meaning. The three persons are to each other as essence, existence, and life; or as *foyer*, pole, and axis; or as "One and . . . Duality, returning by a third term to Unity;"[79] or, finally, as Subject, Object, and *Rapport*. We need not dwell upon this aspect of Bautain's philosophy, save to point out that he differs in one important respect from the Romanticists and Idealists whose views he seems to be following so closely. For them, the universe itself forms one of the moments in the eternal rhythm of the divine nature; God had to manifest Himself in Nature and History, in order to know Himself, and in order to find an object for His affections. For Bautain, on the contrary, God is self-contained and self-sufficient; He is Himself a sufficient object for infinite knowledge, love, and activity; He is therefore in no sense dependent upon the universe, and the universe is *absolutely* dependent upon Him. If He created us, it was out of pure love, and not out of necessity.[80]

To say that God "created us," or that He created the universe as we know it, is not strictly accurate. This world of time and space, of mortality and suffering, is not the world that God created. The true, or celestial world is perfect and changeless; it is eternally conceived and generated in the womb of the divine Wisdom or Understanding, forever fertilized by the influx of the divine Life or Spirit. Each point on the all-embracing sphere of the divine Wisdom is a potential center of life; fertilized by the divine Life, it passes into eternal actuality, and becomes an immortal spirit. In its potential state, the celestial world is the world of the substances, the world of the Platonic reals, which subsist in the divine Understanding "as their ideas or images live, subsist, and move in our understanding." In its actualized state, the celestial world is the world of the heavenly spirits or angels, each of whom manifests some eternal Idea and lives by the divine Spirit.

How, then, did this terrestrial world come into existence? It was the product of a Fall—a fall out of eternity into time, space, and mortality; a fall whose evil consequences far outrun those of

[79] *Rev. Eur.*, IV, 60. *(De l'impuissance de la raison humaine à fonder la science métaphysique.)*

[80] See especially *Phil. Chr.*, Letters 18 and 19, and *Choses de l'autre monde*, 120-140, for Bautain's idea of the Trinity.

Adam's fall, which it far antedated and helped to predetermine. The possibility of this fall lay in the fact that the bond which eternally unites the angels to their divine Source and Goal is a *free* bond, a bond of love and gratitude. If an angelic being is grateful and wise, it will devote itself wholly to the contemplation of God, and so find life and health and joy; but it *may*, if it will, devote itself instead to self-contemplation, and attempt to be autonomous. This attempt is folly, of course, and if successful would lead to utter self-destruction. In mercy, God contends with the would-be suicide, and continues to sustain him in existence; He prevents his destruction, but He cannot prevent his degradation without violating the freedom of his will, which alone makes possible his redemption. Thus, the temporal and visible universe in which we human beings live resulted, according to Bautain, from the foolish self-will of a celestial spirit. We are all implicated in the organism of the "World-Spirit"; our organisms are parts of it; we share in its degradation, which we may help either to increase or to diminish. The origin of this world and the origin of evil are identical—which, at a stroke, disposes of the problem of evil.

"The first effect of evil," says Bautain, "was *time*, which became the basis and law of all the intelligences; then, *space*, the basis and law of the phenomenal world."[81]

In Bautain's doctrine of *time*, there is a curious mingling of Kantian and Neo-Platonic ideas. He accepts Kant's view that time, as we human beings experience it, is purely subjective. It is "the form of our internal sensibility, the intuitive vision of ourselves and of our state," and it comes into existence, for us, only when we become self-conscious, and begin to distinguish our inner states from the external world. Nevertheless, he feels that this human and subjective experience presupposes something more objective and general. Man is a temporal creature not merely because he is *conscious* of the flux of his existence, but because his existence *is* in flux, even before his self-consciousness awakes. He

[81] All quotations in this section are from FB,V2, *Principes de philosophie Métaphysique*. On time, see chap. v of this manuscript; on space, chap. vi. On the problem of evil and the plan of salvation, see also the last few letters in the *Philosophie du Christianisme*.

is a product of the triumph of a "particular, centralizing force" over the "spirit, or general force," the individualization of a species; and he is bound at last to redress the disturbed balance of things by death, which is "the restitution of the particular to the general." In a more objective sense, then, the "time" of each human being is measured out by the pendulum-swing of the oscillatory movement of life, which fills the interval between these two determining moments of birth and death. Moreover, birth and death are characteristic of the whole terrestrial world, and not merely of man; hence, says Bautain, "there is a general time embracing all particular times, within which every temporal creature is born and dies, . . . a general rotation within which every oscillation, every particular notion occurs." This general time, which is "anterior, parallel, and posterior" to the time which we create for ourselves, is the creation of the "World-Spirit," the result of the egocentric motion which he initiated when he first, "attempting to triumph over the universal force, . . . posited himself as an organism, as a self, faced with a self, as a subject-object or personality." General time is "the perpetual oscillation of the life of this false organism, the rotation on its own axis of a self continually dying and reborn." To use a simile of Royce's, the "time-span" of the World-Spirit includes our human time-spans as a sentence includes its words or a symphony its separate melodies; but this is not true of Bautain's God, as it is of Royce's. For God and the angels, and for the human soul when it works free from the dominion of the senses, there is no time.

To recapitulate in Bautain's own words: "Evil is . . . the isolation of the particular in the universal. The effect of evil is time, which is a product of . . . the reflection and turning-back of the creature upon itself; and the consequence of the effect, the product of isolated reflection, time raised to the first power, time ex-posed or outwardly posited, is *space*."

Bautain distinguishes between *size (étendue)*, *space*, and *pure extension*. The *size* (i.e., the body) of each phenomenal creature, is the section of *space* which it appropriates for itself in the course of its organic development; it is bounded by its "poles" or "cardinal points." "Space," says Bautain, "is the great organism [*Macrocosmus*] containing simultaneously every *étendue*, every particular

organism; it is bounded by the poles or cardinal points of the phenomenal world." *Pure extension* is "the manifestation of the Infinite"; it bodies God forth as *étendue* bodies forth the finite individual. It is identical with the divine Understanding. As *étendue* is carved out of space, and presupposes it, so space is carved out of pure extension, and presupposes it.

Besides all these, Bautain distinguishes a fourth kind of space, *Kantian space*, which is "the form of our general *external* sensibility, as time is the form of our *internal* sensibility." Kantian space arises in self-consciousness through contact with the Not-Self; more specifically, through the visual measuring of the distance which separates me from the object which resists me. Thus, while the subject creates his own time, there can be no space without an object—and this applies to *étendue* and general space as well as to particular or Kantian space. If time is the interval between two vital acts of the same vital center, space is the relation between two vital centers. Kantian space applies primarily to the human individual; but the "World-Spirit," by analogy, is said to have not only an organism *(étendue)* but an "empire," a "space," a "world external to himself," which is a portion of pure extension circumscribed by his visual horizon. This circumscribed portion of pure extension is all that gives reality to the world of time and space:

> Time passes, forms change; but space, which contains time and form, is immovable, imperturbable, and changes not, for it is subject to the law of pure extension, the eternal Wisdom . . . which gives *fixity*, *permanence*, and *stability* to space, and which, arresting time, which is only flux and vicissitude, gives it a sort of reality or *present* in and through space.

Caught in this world of time and space, involved in the fate of the World-Spirit, man is in imminent danger of being whirled away in the flux of things; yet it is his high calling to win his way up through level after level of existence, until he arrives at the homeland of the soul, and becomes one with the divine Life. In the first stages of his development, he lives mainly in the physical world, the world of space, the world of the things that pass away. Seeking to subdue this world to his will, he finds himself frustrated, for this is the realm of Destiny, the realm of "rigid forms" and

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"inflexible law." Things attract him and lure him out of himself, and then brutally contravene or ignore him; his life is one long fruitless combat. Discouraged and exhausted, he then retreats within himself, into the world of spirit, the world of time; and, suddenly, "Destiny loses its sway over him." But Stoic equanimity is not the final goal of man's pilgrimage.

> His primal law [says Bautain] is love, communication, devotion to his fellow-men; and that law, so sweet and so divine in itself, becomes a heavy yoke for man, as soon as he isolates himself and attempts to live for himself alone. But if at last he issues from himself, no longer to . . . create a domain for himself in space and to enter into the agitations of time, but to act secretly and silently like Nature, to give himself like light, to devote himself like love, then he comes under the sole sway of the law of pure extension, the law of the eternal Wisdom. . . . As fast as the self is lost or universalized, bits of knowledge gather themselves into true science, science grows into luminous self-evidence, and the love of self becomes the love of the universal—and such is the end of man, towards which his whole life should be directed, and whose delights he tastes, in proportion as he fixes his heart upon it and draws ever nearer to it.

3. *The idea of man.*

We are now prepared to grasp, without much effort, the idea of man. He is, as we have seen, a mixed spirit, with a double nature or substance—"a child of Earth and of starry Heaven," as the old Orphics put it. If it be asked how a being so curiously compounded can cohere, and how a soul and body so radically different from one another can interact, the answer is simple: soul-substance and corporeal substance can never directly interact, but through their spirits they can both cohere and interact. Man has, in fact, three spirits: an intelligent spirit or *intelligence*, whereby he communes with purely intelligible realities; an animal spirit, whose organs are the *senses*, whereby he communes with the sensible or phenomenal world; and a mixed spirit, the *reason*, whereby he combines and sifts the data furnished by the senses. Thus compounded, man is the epitome of the universe; and philosophy accordingly begins with self-knowledge.

Whence came man? from below, or from above? from Nature, or from God? Even in those pre-Darwinian days, the theory

was current that man had evolved from inanimate and unconscious Nature. The idea of evolution, of development, is so central with Bautain that we might expect him to agree with Schelling and Hegel at this point; but he does not.

> Abandoned to herself [he says], physical Nature turns forever in the same circle; like a serpent, it coils and uncoils, shut up in a fatal sequence of cause and effect in the cycle of necessity. The animals never go beyond the range of their instincts; the most industrious do no better to-day than six thousand years ago, and the most stupid are still at the same stage. No advancement, no progress is to be discerned either in the species or in the individual. If there is any amelioration in the world, speaking generally, it is due to the freedom and intelligence of man. . . . Without man the world would have no sense, for it would have no purpose.[82]

If Bautain is an evolutionist, then it is in a purely Neo-Platonic sense; man can evolve because he is in a state of degradation; he can rise because he has fallen.

From the idea of man there spring directly the sciences of *pure* and *experimental* psychology, and, indirectly, the sciences of theodicy, ethics, and logic.

> Anthropology, starting with the data furnished it by ontology with respect to the origin and nature of man, considers the human soul in its root and in its purely spiritual development, as *pure psychology*; in its mixed development through the body, as *experimental psychology*.
>
> It explains the relation of man with his Author, as *Theodicy*; the relation of man with his fellows in *Ethics* or *Morals*; and his relations with sensible and rational things in *Logic*, including Epistemology.[83]

It remains only for us to explain the idea of relation, or *rapport*, which is the key to the last-named sciences.

4. *The idea of rapport.*

As we have already seen, *relation* is one of the three great functions that constitute the *va-et-vient* between the organism and the environment—or, to maintain the proper order, between the environment and the organism. The philosophical scope of this con-

[82] *Psych. Exp.*, I, 152-153.

[83] De Régny, 309-310; cf. *Psych. Exp.*, I, 62 *et seq.*

cept is best revealed in the elaborate "Note on the word *rapport*," in the introductory part of the *Psychologie Expérimentale*.[84] In it the epistemological consequences of the concept of life appear, intimately bound up with various moral and political consequences; for the gist of Bautain's theory of knowledge is this: that knowledge is only one form of the general process of action and reaction between environment and organism, and a secondary form at that, being subordinate to moral or voluntary activity—a thoroughgoing Voluntarism, which is, at the same time, a thoroughgoing Realism, for the object in the knowing process makes the first move.

"No creature," begins Bautain, "lives by itself, or for itself."[85] By the very fact that it belongs to a *world*, its existence depends upon the reciprocal commerce of all, on the continuousness of this commerce, on action and reaction between each Ego and all the non-Egos. This "commerce" constitutes *relationship (rapport)*.

> Every real relation presupposes two terms that are living and not creatures of reason, but which exist, and which the reason is obliged to admit as necessary data in order that there may be a possibility of a relation: two terms distinct and *opposed* though not contrary to each other . . . which act upon each other, and which are to one another as *active* and *passive*, the one giving, the other receiving.[86]

The active term—here the ethical corollaries begin to appear—has authority over the passive, and gives it life and nourishment *if it reacts*. Among all creatures this process of action and reaction is simultaneous, which causes life to circulate "in all the spheres, in all the worlds, in each particular existence in the world."[87]

> I say the circulation of life, for life belongs to no creature; there is but one Being who has life in Himself, of Himself, by Himself, and it is He who disseminates it continuously in all the creation: there is but one Father.[88]

Man's physical life is dependent on a process of *va-et-vient*, between him and the light, the air, and other physical agents; his mental life, on a process of *va-et-vient* between him and "the

[84] *Psych. Exp.*, I, 83-91.
[85] *Ibid.*, 83.
[86] *Ibid.*, 83-84.
[87] *Ibid.*, 84.
[88] *Ibid.*

word," and other social agencies; the earth's natural life, on a process of *va-et-vient* between her and the sun; the earth's cultivated life, on a process of *va-et-vient* between her and man's hand and mind; man's normal life, on a process of *va-et-vient* between him and the family or society; man's "psychic" life, on a process of *va-et-vient* between his inmost soul and the divine Life which is its source.

The meaning of this in the moral and political sphere is obvious. In the *family* and in *patriarchal society*, the source of authority is *paternity*. Paternity is both human and divine.

> The father transmits the life which comes originally from the source of all life and transmits it according to the sacred laws of life; hence the expression *filial piety*, to designate the free and positive reaction of the son toward the father . . . whence results the union, the prosperity, the stability of the family, its duration, its long life on earth. It is the same with a *nation*, which is but a great family issued from the same trunk. Its legislation is largely composed of the traditions of the ancestors, and the elders are the chiefs of the tribe.[89]

In *peoples*, where tradition is broken, the action which commences the organic relation that makes it a social body is performed by a chief or leader. "It is not popular choice which makes the king. . . . The populace does not say, 'I make you king'; it says 'Here is my king.' "[90] The people's acceptance of the king's rule, and their free homage, are what establish the vital process of *va-et-vient* on which the people's life and health depend. The king owes justice to his people partly by virtue of his paternal relation to them, partly by virtue of his filial relation to a higher Power. "The authority once constituted, obedience to the laws and to the government becomes obligatory for the people. It must react by submission. . . ."[91]

In *relations between individuals* the same law holds good.

> Of two men in present and direct relation,[92] there will always be one who will prevail over the other, either by force of body, or by the reason, by the intelligence, by the will. The stronger will thereby be

[89] *Ibid.*, 87-88.
[90] *Ibid.*, 88.
[91] *Ibid.*, 89. The application to the attitude of the good Catholic toward the Holy See is obvious.
[92] Teacher and pupil, for example.

the support and stay, or the oppressor of the weak; and the latter will cling to his patron, or reject the oppression if he can. . . . Support, benevolence and protection, on the one hand; trust, affection and gratitude on the other; this is the law . . . of justice founded in nature.[93]

In the discussion of the relations of man and God, Bautain's theory of religious knowledge is clearly foreshadowed. Man's highest life is in his soul, and his soul is born and nourished by the influx of the divine Life. Hence his highest duty—and highest cognitive act—is free and positive reaction thereto. "He must answer with the heart, with love, to the Love which gives itself; he must make a corresponding reaction to the creating and sustaining action."[94] The initiative is God's, who first loved us; man can no more escape the stimulus of God's love than he can escape from the environing air.

But [adds Bautain] he can refuse his reaction. . . . In that case *he lives an animal and reasonable life, but he does not know psychic life;* he is in relation with nature and his fellows, but not with God; *he is as if dead, or rather he is not born into the intelligible world, and his mind understands nothing of the laws of that world, of metaphysical truths, of the nature of things.*[95] The law of love applied to an invisible object, to what does not fall beneath the senses, seems to him a folly, or weighs upon him like a yoke. He is oppressed by it, and like the poisonous plant which turns into venom the solar ray, he corrupts in himself the divine gift. Hence the uneasiness, the world-weariness *(dégoût)*, the kind of moral fever which torments so many young men in our days.[96]

Through the idea of *rapport*, then, the *idée-mère* of Bautain's system, life as conditioned spontaneity,[97] descends into the phenomenal realm and becomes a guiding principle for man in all his practical relations. It may well seem that in ethics and politics it is not the spontaneity of life, but its necessary conditioning by external stimulation and external authority that is emphasized. When we come to Bautain's philosophy of education, however, it is the other side of his life-formula that strikes our attention. As

[93] *Psych. Exp.*, I, 89-90.
[94] *Ibid.*, 90.
[95] Italics mine.
[96] *Psych. Exp.*, I, 90-91.
[97] I owe the phrase "conditioned spontaneity," as a succinct formula for Bautain's central idea, to Prof. Baudin. Bautain himself, while he objects to Fichte's "absolute spontaneity," coins no phrase to describe his own position.

against the view of education as a sort of coin-minting or putty-molding process—a view all too common among Catholic educators[98]—Bautain upholds the view that education is essentially "the stimulation of the vital energies by means of language, the fecundation of the germs of truth and goodness contained in the human mind and heart, the intelligent culture of the human plant, the most marvellous and delicate of all plants, by adapting oneself to the spontaneous unfolding *(jeu)* of its natural laws, and never violating them."[99] In his theory of education, Bautain is almost at one with Pestalozzi, Froebel, and all the great Romanticists.

It is true that Bautain insists upon the necessity of discipline, arbitrary authority, and the appeal to fear in the training of young children. He mocks at Rousseau's instructor who is so afraid of enslaving the will of his master. He will not explain to young children the motives of his commandments; let them guess his reasons if they can.[100] He does not trust unregenerate human nature to develop rightly without much pruning; the germs of a higher moral and spiritual nature must be "grafted" upon it by the educator.[101]

Nevertheless, the whole aim of this course of discipline is not to impose something upon the individual, but to free the hidden spiritual capacities which lie dormant, incapable of releasing themselves, within the shell of his physical nature. The figure of the "graft" must not be pressed: "The master may exercise his power over the disciple . . . but he cannot force the will to receive the law of another will, and if the word of the master has not in it the germ of a more powerful and purer life, the graft will not take."[102] It is the natural order of the child's development which must be stimulated, directed, fortified, and perfected by instruction, and each stage in this development will "indicate to us of itself the subject of instruction which corresponds to it." "The problem will be solved by Nature itself."[103] As education proceeds, love

[98] See the analysis of Catholic educational theory in G. A. Coe's *Social Theory of Religious Education*, Part V.

[99] Baudin, *Louis Bautain, le philosophe de Strasbourg*, 23.

[100] Ratisbonne, *Essai sur l'education morale*, 5-19.

[101] *Variétés*, 7-9.

[102] *Ibid.*, 9.

[103] Carl, *L'Enseignement de la rhetorique, doit-it précéder . . . celui de la logique?* 8.

takes the place of fear; insight, the place of authority. Ultimately, the pupil is left face to face with the facts, in direct commerce with Reality itself, and all mediate stimulating agencies, such as teachers and books, are to be done away with. Modern French education, with its emphasis on book-learning and quantitative memorization of hearsay, with its absurd manuals of predigested knowledge for the passing of the all-controlling Baccalaureate examination,[104] is not education at all, properly speaking: "we read and listen more than we see and feel; there is almost always a book between us and the object, and we do not trouble ourselves sufficiently to verify what we have read, and to check up by our experience what others have said."[105] Fullness of *experience*—the whole man fully developed by coming into living commerce with the whole of Reality—that is the goal of education for Bautain. If the life-formula seems to make authority predominate at the start, it makes spontaneity and freedom predominate at the end. It is indeed Bautain's chief contention that liberty is *only* to be achieved through submissiveness to authority.

It would not serve our present purpose to go farther into the manifold applications of the concept of life. They are often bizarre—as when he describes the generation of the circle by the self-polarization of the mathematical point, or when he deduces the five vowels as representing various stages in the process of the "subjectivation of the objective, and the objectivation of the subjective";[106] and a collection of absurdities could easily be gathered from his pages which would dissuade any self-respecting philosophical student from devoting any further attention to him. That, in fact, is what most of Bautain's critics have done. But if one grasps at the start his central concept of "life"—a concept, be it noted, that is based upon a genuine knowledge of physiology and genetic psychology—one is at last almost tempted to see sense in all these absurdities, so persuasive is the eloquence with which our philosopher develops the consequences of his theory. Of the

[104] See Bautain's admirable book, *L'Education publique en France au XIXme siècle*, chap. XXVIII and *passim*.

[105] *Psych. Exp.*, I, 223.

[106] *Ibid.*, II, 473. "The O is the A fully objectivated, as the divine Wisdom is the manifestation of God, as the universe is the manifestation of the divine Wisdom." It is the upper pole of A as U is its lower pole, and as E and I are its diameters.

magical power of that eloquence, even the hostile Mennaisian bears witness, in a graphic picture, drawn from the life, of our philosopher spinning the web of his system, and catching his auditors in its tenuous folds:

> He loves to lead you adrift into a labyrinth of digressions, which come one after another and lead you far off from the subject. Thereby, he strikes, he astonishes, he dizzies the imagination. . . . He works upon it first by brilliant descriptions; it reacts toward him by the pleasure it takes in listening to him; he continues to talk to it, he tempts it, he seduces it, it begins to be moved; . . . the line of demarkation between the real world and the imaginary world is gradually effaced; nuances melt into one another; you seem to see, through a transparent language, all the objects that are named to you; you do not perceive that each object changes its form several times while you are still considering it under an identical name; the magician's wand draws you contours of an admirable purity; his index finger stretches out and pursues an existence escaping from a center; his eyes, attentively fixed on his finger, flash out after it; your eyes follow the movement of his eyes and the direction of his finger, and you believe that you are witnessing, with him, a generative radiation, a creation; . . . and when, from that ecstatic state, he lets you come back to yourself, you find nothing left . . . but a dizziness of the head, an oscillatory rocking of the brain, and certain discolored images, without consistency, impalpable, vaporous, and already torn with a hundred rents, which vanish when you stretch out your hand to clutch them.[107]

Having now in hand the clue to this philosophical labyrinth, the reader may be expected to find his way henceforth without difficulty.

[107] *Ens. Phil. B,* 545-547.

# CHAPTER III
# BAUTAIN AS A VOLUNTARIST

In spite of Bautain's bristling hostility to Aristotle and the Scholastics, there is much in his philosophy that ought to appeal strongly to the most ardent neo-Scholastic. His conception of life as a passage out of potentiality into actuality at the solicitation of an external stimulus is at the bottom a thoroughly Aristotelian conception; and our contemporary Catholic neo-Vitalists, if they returned to the study of Bautain, would undoubtedly find in him a congenial spirit, capable of enlightening them on more than one difficult problem. In a sense, Bautain's is the most Catholic of all philosophies; for its very corner-stone is the proposition that the attitude of the Catholic when he humbles himself before ecclesiastical authority is the attitude required of man by his place in the universe, and the proper attitude to take in all life's relations.

When we come to Bautain's theory of knowledge, however, we see the justification for the suspicion with which he has been regarded by Catholics. Let us admit the worst at once: he is one of the original progenitors, in France, of that voluntaristic, anti-intellectualistic philosophy of religion which formed so characteristic a feature of the Modernist movement of 1893-1908. Having admitted the worst at the start, we are entitled to plead for a stay of sentence on the part of the Catholic reader, until certain evidence in mitigation of the offence has been reviewed. Meanwhile, the student of the history of philosophy will be interested to find in Bautain's epistemology many anticipations of recent philosophical tendencies such as pragmatism and Bergsonian intuitionism; and the student of Protestant theology will be interested to note the parallels between the new apologetic inaugurated by Bautain and that inaugurated by Schleiermacher.

## I

### Bautain's Critique of the Reason: His Anti-Intellectualism

It has been customary to see in Bautain simply a radical anti-intellectualist, a fanatical "fideist," demanding the sacrifice of the

reason upon the altar of religion, calling for blind and implicit faith in an essentially irrational revelation. If this be "fideism," it is most unfair to make Bautain the father of it. He does indeed speak of the "impotence of the reason to found a metaphysic"[1] and of the necessity of "believing without seeing"[2]—expressions which give color to the foregoing interpretation, and which, as he often frankly admitted in later life, were unduly disparaging to the reason; but his real intent was to correct and complete the Kantian critique of the reason by making a psychological study of the place of reason among the human faculties, and by pointing the way to a theory of religious knowledge based not on rational "postulates" but on moral and religious experience. "Thus," as he himself says, "we do not exclude the reason either from science or from religion, but we limit its use, and that *by virtue of an exact and thorough critique of its nature and its capacities.*"[3]

Bautain's new *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* never was completed; but we may easily reproduce the main outlines of the projected *magnum opus* by piecing together the many epistemological writings which Bautain produced in his Strasbourg period. It has two parts: a logical critique of the reason, in which he follows Kant; and a psychological critique, in which he endeavors to supplement Kant.

We may dismiss Bautain's logical critique of the reason with a few words. "He may be reproached," as Ferraz justly remarks, "with having reproduced in too vague and summary a fashion the arguments which the German philosopher develops so firmly and precisely."[4] His main contentions may be reduced to two: first, that the reason cannot prove its own axioms, principles, and laws; second, that these same rational laws, categories, etc., which the reason has to accept on trust if it is to function at all, are inapplicable in the sphere of metaphysics and theology—so much so that the reason falls into hopeless antinomies when it endeavors either to prove or to disprove any metaphysical or theological proposition. In support of the first contention, he points to the Kantian forms of the understanding, "inherent in the reason,

[1] Title of his article in *Rev. Eur.*, IV, 58 *et seq.*
[2] FB,H9, *verso.*
[3] *Ibid.*, 9, *recto.*
[4] *Op. cit.*, 344.

essential to it,"[5] and therefore not to be judged by it—unless reason could somehow get outside and above itself. In support of the second, he points to the famous Antinomies as conclusive proof of the *metaphysical* impotence of the reason; to prove its *theological* impotence, he supplements the Antinomies with a set of theological puzzles of his own.

> The Law of Substance, which affirms that there is no quality without a substance, is applicable only where substance manifests itself and distinguishes itself by qualities, by accidents. Applied to the divine world, to God, it no longer has any sense, because God is He who Is, and in Him there is only being and substance, and nothing accidental, contingent, or phenomenal. . . . It is the same with the following axioms: Nothing comes from nothing; the whole is greater than the part; the whole is equal to the sum of its parts.[6]

All such rational axioms lead to pantheism when applied to God; and a rationalistic theology like Scholasticism therefore "compromises the high verities it intends to defend."[7]

But if Bautain follows Kant too tamely and too summarily in his logical critique, it is otherwise with his psychological critique. Here, after all, is where his main emphasis is laid; for it is on the psychological side, as he believes, that the Kantian critique needs correction and supplementation. He characterizes Kant, as "a powerful thinker, but a weak psychologist."[8] No good psychologist, he urges, would ever make so sharp a distinction between the theoretical and practical reason; "the human reason has never actually found itself in the situation supposed by Kant."[9] But Kant's worst mistake was to make reason man's highest faculty, and man's sole cognitive faculty, whereas psychology shows that "man is sensitive, volitional, intelligent, before he is, or can be, reasonable or reasoning."[10] "The *Critique of the Reason*," he concludes, "has determined the power of the reason, but not its nature and its rank in the spiritual organization of man; and that is the point at which he should have started."[11] Our study of Bautain's critique of the

[5] Letter to Riambourg, FB,K, *Cahier* I, 33.
[6] *Psych. Exp.*, II, 363.
[7] *Ibid.*
[8] FB,V3, 18.
[9] *Lettre à Mgr. Lepappe*, 20; cf. *Mor. Ev. D.*, 248.
[10] *Variétés*, 11-12.
[11] *Ibid.*

reason will mainly consist, therefore, of a review of his genetic psychology of the knowing process. Here, as we shall find, is the key to his low estimate of the cognitive validity of reason, as compared with that of intuition ("intelligence"), faith, and revelation.

1. *Genetic psychology of the knowing process:* priority of will over intellect.

Bautain's psychology of cognition falls into two parts. In the first, he traces the evolution of the mind from the undifferentiated soul, and the evolution of the various cognitive faculties and senses from the undifferentiated mind. In the second, he traces the development of the capacity of cognition in the child.

Now that we are familiar with the process by which the organism evolves out of the vital principle, we should be prepared to understand the process by which the cognitive faculties evolve out of the soul. The two processes are strictly parallel; the former is the outward manifestation of the latter.

First of all, then, the genesis of the mind itself is to be sought in something deeper than the mind, and prior to it in order of development: the will, or the soul. As the heart "posits" the brain, sending it forth like a follicle issuing from a seed, so the soul puts forth the mind. The mind is, as it were, the soul's specialized function of cognition; but the soul itself was cognitive before it put forth the mind; and, even after the genesis of mind, the soul's knowledge includes more than that which is conveyed to it by the mind. Experience, in other words, is prior to the specific function of cognition, and represents something more inclusive than cognition. The foetus does not *know,* yet it experiences: "it *feels,* but it is not conscious of the sensation it experiences; it does not know that it feels, or what it feels."[12] Even in the adult, there is a penumbra of vague experience or soul-knowledge forever surrounding and far outrunning the narrow field of clear cognition.

It is well to dwell for a moment upon Bautain's concept of experience. For Locke, experience is a purely passive and intellectual process; for Fichte, a purely active and ethical process. For Bautain, experience is partly passive and partly active; for him,

[12] *Propositions,* 28.

as for Fichte, it is primarily vital and practical, and only secondarily cognitive; its content consists not merely of "ideas" and "sensations," but also and in the first instance, of actions and reactions.[13]

"Experience," says Bautain, "is the indispensable condition of knowledge";[14] but experience, as he describes it, begins with a wholly unconscious outward motion of the spirit toward the stimulating object. "In reacting toward the external object which impresses it, the spirit tends to issue from itself to posit itself in the object, while at the same time it receives and absorbs what the object posits in it."[15] Only on the rebound, on the *vient* which follows the *va*, does spirit catch itself in the act of communicating with the object, and so become cognizant. *Reflection upon experience*, in other words, is the beginning of knowledge.

Just as the soul "posits"[16] the mind, as an organ of cognition, while yet remaining susceptible to many impressions over and above those which it receives through the mind, so the mind (or "reason" or "understanding"; Bautain uses the terms interchangeably at times) posits the various senses.

> All sensation presupposes in the sentient subject the *foyer*, the sense, and the organ. The *foyer* is the capacity in which the impressions come to unite themselves, the central point where the vibrations of life resound or come to their final harbor; it is what is called the *sensorium commune*. The senses are the radii of the *foyer*, the conductors of the vital action; the organs of external perception, all located on the surface of the body, are the poles of the *foyer*, the extreme ends of the radii, the intermediaries between the subjective spiritual world and the objective material world, the gateways of communication between the *me* and the physical world.[17]

[13] He differs from Fichte in conceiving the process realistically, not idealistically. The object is there before the subject, and makes the first move in the process of *va-et-vient* which constitutes experience.

[14] *Psych. Exp.*, I, 221.

[15] *Ibid.*, 224.

[16] The word *poser* (or *se poser*) seems to be used as a technical philosophical term in Bautain's writings, so I translate it pretty uniformly by the philosophical term *posit*; but its meaning is vague and shifting, being much affected by Bautain's fondness for biological metaphors. Here, the soul "posits" its mind as a plant "puts forth" its leaves. When it is said (p. 94) that spirit issues from itself to "posit itself" *(se poser)* in the object, a sexual metaphor seems to be implied. More generally, the verb means "to objectivate, to call into existence," or simply "to lay down a proposition."

[17] *Psych. Exp.*, I, 262-263.

The senses must not be confused with the sense-organs:

> Sense in itself is purely spiritual; it is a ray [*rayon*=ray or radius] and as it were a prolation of the mind: the organ is material; it is a part of the body. . . . There must be a midpoint, where organic life and mind meet and interpenetrate; but it is impossible for us to apprehend it by observation.[18]

The distinctness of sense from organ and the priority of the former, follow from the fact that while the organ is dependent upon the sense, the sensation is sometimes possible without the organ.

> A dead or artificial eye, or a *camera obscura*, also reproduces an image, but they do not see. . . . Behind the eye, the optic nerve, and the brain, there is a living and active principle which has the faculty of vision, as it has that of willing and feeling.
>
> And so [he adds elsewhere] we see that the function of each sense, although attached more particularly to an organ, is nevertheless not absolutely dependent on it; for if that organ happens to be lacking, the sense breaks out *(se fait jour)* at another point, trying to create a new organ, and the mind reaches almost the same knowledge by way of another avenue—less trustworthy and convenient to be sure, because it is not in conformity with the natural plan of the organism.[19]

To sum up, then: the sense-organs are the material instruments of the senses, which in turn are "radiations from a single center, the *sensorium commune*, which is itself but a pole or secondary center of the one general faculty of sensation *(sensibilité)*."[20] By the faculty of sensation, Bautain means that part of the mind which is directed toward the material universe. When directed intuitively toward ideas, the mind is called the intelligence, while between the senses and the intelligence lies another mental faculty, the reason, whose function is to work up discursively and combine logically the data furnished it by them. All these mental faculties, finally, are secondary functionaries of the soul, whose chief functionary is the *will*. Certainly the "functional" point of view in psychology was never pushed farther than this!

Turning now from this somewhat speculative account of the "descent of spirit into matter," we return to the world of experi-

[18] *Ibid.*, 263.
[19] *Ibid.*, 293 and 371.
[20] *Ibid.*

ence, and ask ourselves how knowledge originates and develops in the individual. Here we shall be following an inverse order of evolution; for the senses, which are the outer shell of the soul, are the first of the soul's capacities to pass into activity. "The development of physical man . . . takes place in descending order," says Bautain, "since he goes from unity to multiplicity; that of spiritual man takes place in ascending order, since he goes from multiplicity to unity."[21] Having watched the soul split up into faculties in descending into matter, we are now to watch it unify itself as it ascends out of matter.

The child's first mental act, and the first step in each subsequent act of cognition is an act of "conception," strictly analogous to physical conception. Without conception, no knowledge. Sensations and perceptions furnish the materials for knowledge; but, until conception gathers them up into a unified representation, "into a single *vue d'ensemble*, into a sign,"[22] cognition cannot be said to have begun. And when conception has taken place, the most significant stage in conception has been passed. Conception, says Bautain, is the *punctum saliens* of thought, the seed from which all else springs. The best that reasoning can do is to develop the implications which were implicit in this seed from the first, or, from time to time, gather up these developments into the seed once more, "again like Nature, which gathers up into the seed all the results of the development of the plant."[23] "The fundamental condition of right knowledge," says Bautain, "is therefore right conception . . . and that is just what education, instruction, and toil can never give, any more than cultivation changes the nature of the seed."[24] Like physical conception, intellectual conception involves four terms:

(1). A passive form or capacity fit to receive fecundation, and to contain and nourish the product.

(2). Germs ready for fecundation, contained in this mother-form.

(3). A fecundating agent.

(4). A reaction to the initial stimulus of the fecundating agent.

(1). *A passive form*—the Understanding.

[21] *Psych. Exp.*, I, 346. [22] *Ibid.*; II, 3. [23] *Ibid.* [24] *Ibid.*

By the "Understanding" Bautain means something far more specific than Locke's "human understanding," and something different from the Kantian *Verstand*, which is identical with the judgment. He means that power, inherent in the mind, which Kant "has perfectly distinguished": the *Vorstellungsvermögen*, or capacity of "bringing back to the unity of its form all the intuitions of experience, so as to reduce them to a representative conception, to render them comprehensible."[25] It may be called a "mental matrix," a "*camera obscura*," a "living mirror of the soul."

> It is a luminous sphere in the center of which the soul, the psychic eye, has its seat, which, by its glance and visual radius, itself traces the boundaries of its world. The understanding is to the soul what the circumference is to the geometrical point: it sets a limit to its development; it circumscribes its radiation.[26] The form of the understanding is therefore that of a world. . . .
>
> It is a mirror with two faces; one convex, turned toward the exterior world, receives sense impressions and reproduces the images of objects, and in this case one may say that it spiritualizes matter, idealizes the concrete, by the conceptions that it forms; the other concave, turned inward toward the psychic and intelligent nature, receives impressions of the things which correspond to it, and, making us conceive them as images, sensualizes the spiritual and, up to a certain point, materializes the ideal.[27]

(2). *Germs of Knowledge, ready for fecundation.*

Here Bautain touches upon the vexed question of "innate ideas." "There is no more an innate idea in the human understanding," he says, "than there is an innate human being in the womb of woman; but in both cases there are germs awaiting fecundation in order to take on life and to develop."[28] Thus Bautain's theory differs both from the *tabula rasa* theory of Locke and from the theory of a "deposit of ideas, all formed, or, as it is commonly expressed, engraved within our soul."[29] It admits, for example, that we all possess the *germs* of the knowledge of good and evil, but insists that, "if a word of authority does not lay down the law before us and in us, . . . the germ will remain sterile, the idea will not form."[30]

[25] *Ibid.*, 6.

[26] Bautain remarks elsewhere that the mental powers of different men are to each other as the radii of their spheres of understanding.

[27] *Psych. Exp.*, II, 4, 5, 9.

[28] *Ibid.*, 11.

[29] *Ibid.*

[30] *Ibid.*, 18.

Each conception thus contains an *a priori* element and an *a posteriori* element, and opens the way to two separate orders of knowledge.

On the one hand, conception implies the presence in the understanding, in embryo, "before all experience,"[31] of "the general and particular forms which are the bases of our conceptions, or otherwise the germs of all knowledge."[32] These include "rational axioms, mathematical definitions, and those transcendental affirmations which are marked at the very start with the character of the universal, the infinite, the absolute."[33] Thus arises a type of science, best illustrated by mathematics, which is completely *a priori*, being founded on reflection upon the "pure and general forms of the development of life and the laws which preside over it, in so far as these laws are inherent in our soul, in our faculties, in our understanding, and consequently in all the germs which develop in it."[34] This type of science expresses itself "by synthetic *a priori* judgments, by apodictic propositions, posited on the occasion of facts, but not founded on facts and not drawing their vitality therefrom."[35] To deny such propositions or even to discuss them is "to call the human reason into question; it is to take away from it all means of operating and of proving anything."[36]

On the other hand, conception involves an objective stimulus, and so gives rise to *a posteriori* or experimental sciences. It is noteworthy, however, that each *a posteriori* science has an *a priori* element in it, a "pure" or "transcendental" side as well as a "historical" or "empirical" side. This *a priori* element is "above discussion,"[37] and "furnishes principles for reasoning,"[38] to dispute which would be to destroy the possibility of making progress in the science. "Hence the necessary *a priori* judgments of the theologian, the philosopher, the artist, the physicist; hence the dogmas, the original definitions, the axioms, the aphorisms, the higher rules of art"[39]—all of which like the theorems of mathematics are absolutely necessary, while the empirical part of science, on the contrary, is always subject to revision and criticism.

[31] *Psych. Exp.*, II, 13.
[32] *Ibid.*, 11.
[33] *Ibid.*, 11-12.
[34] *Ibid.*, 14.
[35] *Ibid.*
[36] *Ibid.*
[37] *Ibid.*, 16.
[38] *Ibid.*
[39] *Ibid.*

(3). *A fecundating agent.*

In accordance with his high estimate of the dignity of the sense of sight, Bautain gives to that agent which fecundates the understanding the name of *light*. All knowledge, all truth, even though it comes through nature or through men, even though it enters through the sense of hearing or the sense of taste, flows ultimately from the Eternal Light whose beams are incessantly beating upon us in the endeavor to communicate the Truth to us; and it does not rise to the status of knowledge until it is not merely felt or sensed but *seen*. The prophet or genius occasionally gets an "illumination": "Eternal Light, enlightening his intelligence, there produces those sublime conceptions which are half of heaven and half of earth, and which he is obliged to express in the manner of men in order to be understood of men."[40] Most of us, however, can trace the immediate paternity of our mental concepts to some natural object or some human teacher, who in this case acts as a transmitting agent for the divine Light, "a delegate of Him from whom all paternity in heaven and earth is derived,"[41] a consideration which gives a certain sacredness to the teacher's task. The case of natural objects is not so clear as that of human teachers; it is hard to see how natural objects can be conceived to impart their truth actively, deliberately, insistently, to the dormant mind, as a teacher does. But it must be remembered, in the first place, that Bautain has a vitalistic view of Nature, and, in the second place, that, like Berkeley, he sees God everywhere behind Nature, insistently signalling to man.

(4). *Reaction of the soul to the initial external stimulus.*

The environment takes the initiative, to be sure, in the formation of knowledge as in all the relations of life; it is the father of our knowledge; but our mind is the mother thereof. Did not the mind react, conception could not occur. As in the physical order, mental conception often occurs when least expected; response does not always ensue upon the first stimulus.

You are listening to an eloquent man, a minister of the sacred word, a philosopher, a politician, an orator, a lawyer, a schoolmaster if you

[40] *Ibid.*, 20-21. [41] *Ibid.*, 21.

will—the degree or the form matters little, so long as the word is warm, vital, full of light and intelligence or full of feeling and soul—and suddenly you feel yourself dominated, penetrated, moved; something has entered you which has illuminated your mind or touched your heart. You react instinctively, without reflection, almost unconsciously to that word which draws and charms you; the ray of the Truth pierces you in the midst of the floods of light wherewith she inundates you. The germ of a new idea is fecundated in your understanding; you have conceived.[42]

This first mental reaction of the vital principle in the child to the stimulus of the environment is akin to what later becomes the act of attention; but Bautain is unwilling to call it attention at this stage. It is only a step removed from those blind and instinctive preferential reactions which occur everywhere in the organic and inorganic realms, wherever a "particular life" responds to the "general life": the reaction of an animal to its prey, the reaction of a seed to the sunlight, the reaction of an acid to a base—for Bautain sees a certain discernment, and one might almost say a choice, in chemical reactions. Attention, properly speaking, does not appear until, with the development of self-consciousness in the child, the stage of moral liberty and personality succeeds to that of physical liberty and individuality—which, says Bautain, is "common to persons and things."[43]

Bautain's account of the development of self-consciousness is interesting. At first, he says, the child is "as if identified or fused with his environment."[44] He has not yet acquired even *individuality*. The consciousness of individuality, or "personal unity," grows with the consciousness of *need;* "it becomes more trenchant and precise as needs multiply."[45] At this stage the child speaks of himself in the third person, and "he knows himself . . . only from without, by his exterior form, about as one sees oneself in a mirror."[46] Animals are capable of reaching this stage. *Personality* comes only with the beginning of the comprehension of language. "The self of the child is awakened by the opposition of another self which makes itself felt in him by speech or by action."[47] Speech makes thought possible: "Our thoughts, our reflections, and

[42] *Psych. Exp.*, II, 24-25.
[43] *Ibid.*, 132.
[44] *Ibid.*, 95.
[45] *Ibid.*, 97.
[46] *Ibid.*
[47] *Ibid.*, 98.

all the operations they involve, are produced by the aid of the signs of language. That is why the child talks before thinking; for it is only by hearing speech that he acquires by the hearing the necessary signs for the formation and expression of his thought."[48] Full-fledged self-consciousness involves a further step, reflection upon one's own thoughts, and this develops through internal conversation.

> To understand oneself well, one must begin by talking to oneself. Thought, however abstract it may be, is never anything but an interior speech. Now, it is when the child becomes capable of thus talking to himself inside, and objectifying by reflection what he feels, conceives, and wills, that he acquires the consciousness of the self and of his personality.[49]

In the course of this evolution of self-consciousness, true *attention* begins to manifest itself, particularly in the *glance* of the child's eyes. Attention, says Bautain, is "an act rather than a faculty"[50]—an act of the soul, which darts forth through the senses like

> the spider in the midst of the web she has posited by her activity, and with which she has cleverly enveloped herself, extending her feet on the principal radii of the circle whose center she is; so that, the least movement of the extremities being communicated to the center, she reacts with suddenness and darts to the point which has been moved.[51]

She never darts to more than one point at a time; Condillac is wrong in supposing that the judgment of relation is a simultaneous act; it is successive, for the soul is caught invincibly in the web of time; but the mind reduces to unity the duality of the impressions gathered successively by the attention.

Attention is very closely allied to the will; it is "the first exercise of moral liberty or voluntary reaction toward a certain object."[52] Its vigor depends partly on the vigor of the external stimulus and its suitability to the state of the organism, and partly on the vigor of the will. "Obstacles, when they are not overwhelming, excite to a high degree the reaction of the will"[53] and

[48] *Ibid.*, 99.
[49] *Ibid.*, 100.
[50] *Ibid.*, 117.
[51] *Ibid.*, 115.
[52] *Ibid.*, 114.
[53] *Ibid.*, 119.

so aid attention. You may always win attention, if you speak to the soul of "what she loves, what she desires, what she fears, what she hopes."[54]

Attention has three forms: external observation, reflection or internal observation, and contemplation, which "is in the intellectual order what prayer is in the moral order, an elevation of the soul to God."[55] The moral act must always underlie the intellectual act; it is the pure in heart who see God. "Attention, in its three modes, is thus in relation with the concrete or with individualities through the senses, with the abstract or with generality [the world of thought] by reflection, with the infinite or with universality through contemplation."[56]

We have now reached the point in mental development where we can begin to talk about *thought*. Sense-impressions are the raw material for thought; conception puts this raw material in shape to handle; attention is nascent thought; but thought does not begin until self-consciousness is complete—a proposition whose converse is also true. "It seems as though an act of thought were necessary to constitute the self, and nevertheless, without the self already posited, the act of thought appears impossible."[57] Reason is helpless to decide this question; "we must appeal to experience which cuts through the difficulty with the sword of fact, while reason is vainly laboring to untie it."[58] Experience shows that the first act of thought is the act by which self-consciousness constitutes itself: "an act of sovereignty whereby the self recognizes itself and establishes itself as the center of all its operations, the substance of all its modifications, the chief of all that emanates from it and from the environment."[59]

The aim of thought is explanation. Man is the only creature who demands explanations, for he alone seeks to bring all other creatures under his rule by means of his intelligence. To explain nature is to form a system of concepts parallel to the system of things, which man "can compose and decompose in his mind as nature makes and unmakes the existences,"[60] thus facilitating the handling and mastering of nature. As to the accuracy of such

[54] *Psych. Exp.*, II, 120.
[55] *Ibid.*, 129.
[56] *Ibid.*, 130.
[57] *Ibid.*, 138.
[58] *Ibid.*
[59] *Ibid.*
[60] *Ibid.*, 139.

systems of concepts, "experience decides more than discussion."[61]

"All the functions of thought reduce themselves to a single act, to judge."[62] *Judgment* is akin to choice; the mind, like the will, acts chiefly by choosing.[63] Man is "obliged to act in the midst of opposing or diverse terms which dispute with each other for his consent and seek his preference."[64] The conscious and reflective element in judgment is not the essential thing. The real reason we are able to judge and discern between good and bad, beautiful and ugly, etc., is that we have a sort of taste or feeling for these distinctions—an *évidence intuitive*:[65]

> This feeling, this original taste, contains virtually in itself all the judgments that we shall pass upon things; . . . consequently, all the work of the mind and of speech is to explain to ourselves and to others what we have felt. The mind's reflection transforms feeling into judgment; it decomposes the brute fact into its various elements, . . . then it translates the result into propositions which enounce successively and in order what was simultaneous and confused.[66]

When the power to judge manifests itself, *reason* may be said to have dawned. Judgment is, according to Bautain's analysis, "the simplest act of the reason." It begins to be exercised even before the child learns the use of articulate language. But reasoning, which Bautain calls "the most complex act of the reason," is impossible without a highly developed language. Induction and deduction are both essentially linguistic processes; "it is always a case of reducing several signs to a single one, which then becomes a general term, or resolving a single sign into several, which are to it what individuals are to the species and the genus."[67] "To explain the formation of language is therefore," he concludes, "to explain the primitive development of the reason."[68]

We shall not go into Bautain's philosophy of language,[69] al-

[61] *Ibid.*

[62] *Ibid.*, 140.

[63] If asked how *a priori* judgments, which he has declared (p. 99) to be "absolutely necessary," can be matters of choice, Bautain would probably answer that choice is not always arbitrary. In the case of *a priori* judgments, the compass of the human will is fixed and invariable; in the case of empirical judgments, it is apt to fluctuate.

[64] *Psych. Exp.*, II, 141.

[65] *Ibid.*, 163.

[66] *Ibid.*, 165-166.

[67] *Ibid.*, 327.

[68] *Ibid.*, 201.

[69] For Bautain's philosophy of language, see *Psych. Exp.*, II, 106-143. Cf. Adolph Carl's two theses, on "The Origin and Nature of Human Speech," and "Articulate Language," Strasbourg, Silbermann, 1827.

though he accords to it a place of great importance in his psychology of cognition. On the whole, the less attention paid to it, the better for our philosopher's reputation. He has an almost Swedenborgian reverence for the divine mysteries of etymology; and he is even disposed to take Plato's "Cratylus" seriously! We may sum the matter up by saying that all articulate languages are inperfect expressions of a spontaneous language common to all men, and best seen in the untaught ejaculations of the child. If language accomplished its ideal purpose, it would constitute a series of words entirely parallel to the series of real things and events, which reason could then handle as if it were dealing with the facts themselves; but, unfortunately, as language becomes articulate, it ceases gradually to represent the object, as it did in its spontaneous stage, and comes more and more to represent the reflective reactions of the subject—and reflection distorts everything. Rational disputation is therefore apt to lead us farther and farther from the truth, because of the inaccuracy of the linguistic tools with which it operates. The appeal to experience from the court of reason is always justifiable.

Reason's great failing is *abstraction*. "It operates on the things of the spirit as anatomy does on the body: it dissects, divides, decomposes, and consequently it presupposes death—or it kills."[70] Nature is alive; her primary process is typified by the development of the plant from the seed; it is a progression from unity to multiplicity, in which the original unity is never lost. If therefore, thought is to seize the true order of things, it ought to follow the order of nature, and seize first the spirit, the life, the germinative principle which constitutes the unity of the phenomenon under investigation. It should look at things, as Bautain says, "from above downward"; or as Bergson would say, from within. Reason is capable, *under higher guidance*, of following this logic of nature, which Bautain (most misleadingly) calls *analysis*, or deduction; but, left to itself, reason always prefers the method of *synthesis*, of *induction*, of *aggregation and segregation*. It prefers to treat things not as organic wholes, but as isolated and infinitely divisible fragments, which can be combined mechanically into a logical structure, as a house is built of bricks. It looks at things "from below

[70] *Psych. Exp.*, II, 333.

upward, contrary to the natural order, and retracing, so to speak, the steps by which nature posits and develops the facts."[71] Reason, left to itself, is therefore perpetually tending to reduce organisms to mechanisms, and the whole body of natural science, which is the typical product of the unaided human reason, presents a thoroughly artificial view of the world, compounded, as Bautain puts it, not of true *ideas*, but of mere *notions*.

If, therefore, man is able to know things as organic, living, and intelligent; if he has intimations of a spiritual world behind the natural; if, in spite of what his reason tells him, he refuses to see in the universe a great mechanism, it implies that he possesses a faculty higher than reason, responsive to deeper realities than reason is cognizant of. To this faculty Bautain gives the name of *intelligence*. If reasoning be "the most complex act of the mind," the exercise of the intelligence is "the purest act of the mind."

In the earlier stages of the child's development, intelligence is not distinguishable as a distinct faculty.[72] It manifests itself only in certain *types* of attention, judgment, and reasoning. The child is a little animal, to whom the material world seems far more real than the spiritual world. He knows about the spiritual world only what his elders tell him, in the course of his moral and religious instruction. Intelligence appears in him as *faith*—a confused premonition of the truth of what his elders tell him. Faith is hardly to be called knowledge; yet if the child is not taught the moral law and the first principles of religion, or if he deliberately rejects such teaching, his intelligence will never develop.

It is at the critical period of adolescence that the intelligence develops as a separate faculty. The adolescent is at the portal of a new and larger world: "there is a new life in his inner nature, a life of the heart, a life of affection which declares itself by the need of loving, and a life of the intelligence which manifests itself in the need of admiring." This "need of admiring," or love of beauty, may attach itself exclusively to some human object of affection, or it may lead on to a lifelong quest for "the supreme and imperishable Beauty." Still higher than the love of beauty,

[71] *Ibid.*, 341.

[72] For the following account of the "development of the intelligence genetically considered," see *Psych. Exp.*, II, §§ 158-161.

because still more detached from the phenomenal world, is the love of truth. This, too, is a characteristic adolescent phenomenon. The child asks "why," but is satisfied with more or less superficial explanations; in the adolescent, the love of truth becomes a consuming thirst for ultimate explanation. "In all things it is pushed to the infinite, and is not satisfied unless it perceives in each question, in each science, the relation of the infinite to the finite and the living bond that unites them." With most men this is a passing phase; but there are those who make the pursuit of Absolute Truth their lifelong mission. These are the "men of the infinite," the men of intelligence, the heaven-sent geniuses and prophets who make up by the keenness of their intelligence for the sodden unreceptiveness of the rest of us.

With the development of the intelligence, we would seem to be at the end of our genetic psychology of cognition; for the intelligence is the highest of the cognitive faculties.

> But [says Bautain] man is not made merely to know and to admire; he is above all created to love; and thus the development of his intelligence should lead to the development of his soul; truth should lead to goodness, knowledge to love. He should become more enlightened only to become better. It is in the sovereign Good and by love that his intellectual perfection is consummated; for in the real universe the True is the expression of the good, and the Beautiful, the splendor of the True.[73]

There is a higher knowledge, then, than even the knowledge of the intelligence: the knowledge of the heart. That which is deepest in us responds to that which is deepest in reality; and that which is deepest in us is not the mind, but the will, the heart, the soul. If, then, the metaphysician is to be perfectly prepared for his task, he must not only, as Plato advises, learn to love Beauty through the love of beautiful objects, and rise from love of Beauty to love of Truth; he must also learn, through the love of family, of country, of humanity, of enemies, of all creatures great and small, to love "the supreme Good who gives Himself to all and excepts none."[74] If we would know, we must first love; for "love alone unites intimately to the object,"[75] while cold intellectual

[73] *Psych. Exp.*, II, 407-408. [74] *Ibid.*, 409. [75] *Ibid.*, 408.

curiosity contents itself with externals, and ill-will or impurity absolutely distorts the vision. The dialectic of the intelligence thus leads into the dialectic of the will; the conditions of knowledge are ultimately moral. Faith, the beginning of virtue, and Love, the perfection of virtue, are at the same time the beginning and end of all wisdom and all knowledge.

We see, then, that one source of Bautain's anti-intellectualism is his psychological voluntarism: the doctrine of the primacy of the will, and the instrumental character of the intellect. But the will is not the only thing that Bautain ranks above reason; "intelligence," faith, and tradition also stand above it in his estimation. We must therefore class him not only as a voluntarist, but also as an intuitionist, a fideist, and a traditionalist. Our understanding of his "Critique of the Reason" will not be complete until we have explained each of these terms with some care.

2. *Reason and intelligence:* Bautain as an intuitionist.

First of all, then, the contrast between reason and intelligence with which we are already familiar, implies an intuitionism similar to Bergson's. This will become abundantly clear if we pause to examine Bautain's doctrine a bit more carefully.

Intelligence, reason, and imagination are, according to Bautain, the three "powers" of the mind. They spring from the same mind, and yet are distinct,[76] for they differ according to the natures from which they have issued, and the objects toward which they direct their attention. Imagination is purely physical, and conveys knowledge of the physical world alone; reason is an *esprit mixte*, on the border-line between the physical and the spiritual, capable of inferring the existence of the spiritual world but not capable of describing it; intelligence is purely spiritual, communicating immediately with the intelligible world and the divine Wisdom. The imagination gives us *images;* the reason gives us *notions;* the intelligence gives us *ideas.* The reason plus the imagination—which Bautain often loosely comprehends within the term "reason"—can at best give us empirical knowledge, *connaissance*, the Platonic δόξα. Science, ἐπιστήμη, the knowledge of the metaphysical world, is attainable only through a higher faculty.

[76] *Ibid.*, § 154.

It is by the psychic eye that you enter into relation with the intelligible light, with the spiritual world, with the Truth; and since . . . Truth is the daughter of Heaven, you must lift the soul's glance toward the celestial region to find and contemplate her. In vain would you seek for her through the reason, since reason is the soul directing its glance toward the things of earth. . . . It sees only the shadows below, the figures, or the reflections of what exists on high in idea, in truth, in substance. You must not try to seek . . . the day-star on earth, or try to see the earth in the sun; you must see them each in its place and in their mutual relations.[77]

How can one distinguish intelligence from reason, psychologically? By the fact that intelligence grasps truth immediately, all at once, while "the action of the reason, on the contrary . . . is always complex, successive, fractional; . . . its highest operation, reasoning, is the sign of its imperfection, since it proceeds slowly from the known to the unknown, borrowing the aid of middle terms to unite extremes whose relation is not immediately seized."[78] Boethius expressed it perfectly: "Reason is to the intelligence as time is to eternity."[79] Intelligence is more similar to the senses, psychologically speaking, than to the reason; it is an *interior vision.*

In neither [interior nor exterior vision] is there any active reflection, any admixture of thought. When I look at an object, I observe, I consider, but I do not think at all; and as soon as I think, I no longer see the outward object, but its image in my understanding. It is the same in the contemplation of the Truth, or of an Idea; I see, I look, I admire, I am penetrated by the light of the thing and feel it deliciously, but I do not think; and if reflection intervenes, contemplation ceases and enjoyment with it.[80]

In certain cases reason acts like intelligence, as when the relation between several terms is seized at a glance; but in those cases the reason is evidently penetrated by the intelligence. The more slowly the mind passes from one object to another by means of a relation, the more rational and the less intelligent it is. Bautain thus ascribes to reason a sort of twilight region of mediate knowledge lying between two sunlit regions of immediate knowledge, the region of imagination and the region of intelligence. The

[77] *Phil. Chr.*, I, 182.
[78] *Psych. Exp.*, II, 364.
[79] *De consolatione, lib.* 5, *ex prosâ* 4.
[80] *Psych. Exp.*, II, 372.

region of imagination is the realm of existences, of images, of fleeting phenomena; the region of intelligence is the realm of the divine, the realm of pure and changeless Being, where the Platonic ideas descend in stately hierarchy from the idea of Being, triply refracted into the ideas of the Good, the True, and the Beautiful.

The historical antecedents and affinities of this distinction between intelligence and reason should suggest themselves at once. Bautain is quite conscious of the derivation of his doctrine. He refers to the similes of the twice-divided line and the cave, in Plato's *Republic;* to the dialectic of beauty, in the *Symposium;* to Plotinus's distinction[81] between the eye of the body and the interior eye; to St. Augustine's distinction between *intellegere* and *ratiocinari*, reflected in the distinction between *intellectus* and *ratio*, made by St. Anselm, Gerson, St. Bernard, St. Thomas, and others.[82] He is particularly fond, as we have seen, of Boethius' aphorism that reason is to intelligence as time is to eternity. When time shall pass away, reason must vanish with the world of phenomena, but intelligence shall endure forever.

In the Romantic period, this contrast of intelligence and reason was everywhere afloat, in one form or another. It was one expression of the underlying mysticism of the times. The matter was complicated, however, by the fact that terminology was inconsistent. Many who believed as firmly as Bautain in the existence of a "transcendental" intuitive faculty were accustomed to call it "reason" *(raison, Vernunft);* while they gave the name of "understanding" *(entendement, Verstand)* to Bautain's "reason." This was the form in which the doctrine was set forth by the French Eclectics; and this was the form in which Coleridge, influenced by Jacobi and other German Romanticists, popularized it in the English-speaking world. There is therefore a closer affinity between Bautain and the New England Transcendentalists than might appear from their terminology. To Emerson, as to Bautain, Plato's twice-divided line is the beginning of all philosophy.[83] There is one important difference, however, between Bau-

[81] *Enn.* I. Bk. VI.

[82] Here are some of the exact references he gives: Plato, *Phaedo*, § 27; Aristotle, *Ethics*, VI, 1; St. Augustine, *De Spiritu et Anima*, Bk. I, Ch. 14; *De Trinitate*, ch. VII, *in fine;* St. Thomas, *Summa*, Q. 64, Art. 2; Q. 58, Art. 3; Gerson, *De Mystica Theologia Speculativa*, Consid. XI, p. 371; XXVI, p. 382.

[83] See the essay on Plato in Emerson's *Representative Men.*

tain and other Transcendentalists: they looked upon "reason" as an innate faculty, whereby the man of genius could pierce at once to the heart of reality without the aid of instruction or tradition; he, too, regarded it as innate, *potentially*, but he insisted that it would never develop except through docile assimilation of tradition.

We shall return shortly to the important question of Bautain's attitude to tradition. But meanwhile, let us note that reason and intelligence are *logically* as well as *psychologically* distinguishable. This comes out most clearly in Bautain's contrast between two types of logic, which he calls "analysis" and "synthesis," but which might better be called "the logic of organism" and "the logic of mechanism," or "the logic of intelligence" and "the logic of reason." Here once more we are reminded of Bergson.

We have already noted, in passing, Bautain's distinction between "analysis" or the "method of nature," and "synthesis," or "artificial" reasoning. Paradoxically enough, he seemed to be identifying them with *deduction* and *induction*, respectively—and yet, as we know, he heaps bitter scorn on the syllogism. As a matter of fact, the identification of analysis and deduction is only a metaphor.

> Truly logical deduction [says the Mennaisian] be it ever so little artificial, is in his eyes but a synthesis. He will never draw you a conclusion, never will he lay down a chain of reasoning, he is the sworn enemy of reasoning; it is not *demonstrations* that he makes, but *expositions*, and so to speak, *monstrations*. How, to be sure, could he *demonstrate* anything to you, starting from a principle which he admits to be obscure and mysterious? He can only *exhibit (montrer)* to you what has issued from the principle, and that at a certain distance from the source.—As one gets farther and farther from the principle, he says, all becomes clear.[84]

This very just observation of the Mennaisian takes us straight to the heart of the matter. The contrast between the two logics has nothing to do with the contrast between deduction and induction. Neither should the words "analysis" and "synthesis" mislead us. They mean the precise opposites of what they naturally suggest to us: "*non enim analysis ea est quae naturam secat, ut partes deinde componat.*"[85] The following passage from Bautain's manuscript *Logique* should remove all possible misunderstandings:

[84] *Ens. Phil. B.*, 515.

[85] Gratry, *de Methodis Scientiarum*, 25.

Condillac has well said that *analysis* is the essentially natural method; but Nature's analysis is not what he describes to us. Nature's analysis is *positive*, because she posits externally what the principle contained within it, because she de-duces and renders evident what was mysterious and hidden. Condillac's analysis is de-positive, decomposing; it destroys instead of deducing; it dissects or chops up the unity of the form, to get hold of the laws of life which move and animate it.[86]

In other words, the contrast with which we have to do is simply an application of the familiar Romanticist contrast between *organism* and *mechanism:* the true and natural logic (analysis) is the logic of organism, the logic of genesis and evolution; artificial logic (synthesis) is the logic of mechanism, the logic of juxtaposition and construction. To use the terminology of the Mennaisian, analysis is the method of "emanation and reabsorption, exit and reëntrance, extraction and reinsertion," while synthesis is the method of "aggregation and segregation." "The first of these methods," he observes, "shows us the genealogical relations, the living relations, of things; the second, their collateral relations, depending on their respective position, their inorganic, brute, and, as it were, *dead* relations."[87] Or, once more, to use Bergson's famous analogy, the logic of mechanism gives detached pictures of aspects of reality, side by side on a moving-picture reel, while the logic of organism gives us the living, moving reality which is only approached when all these pictures are thrown in swift succession upon the screen. But let Bautain speak for himself:

It is this vital and natural, regular and harmonious development out of a single idea that essentially distinguishes *science* from every system of *connaissance*. *Science*, like a veritable *organism*, is engendered and conceived in the *foyer* of the spirit by *intussusception*, and develops out of a single form as does the foetus out of a human germ, as does the oak out of the acorn, the tree out of the seed. *Connaissance* is not developmental but constructive: it is a product of art, the fruit of the artist's effort to imitate nature. It is formed by synthesis, sorting-out, aggregation, *juxtaposition*. It is, in its systematic perfection, a mechanical imitation of *science*, as every work of art is an imitation of the efforts and the products of Nature. But the most perfect mechanism is never more than a simulacrum of organism, as the masterpiece of art is never more than a dead and simulated representation of life. Organism springs from

[86] FB,B5, § 154.

[87] *Ens. Phil. B.*, 499-500.

a living centre; it is a spirit clad in its form, which belongs to it and issues from it *(sa forme à lui et de lui)*, while mechanism, dead in itself, is only fit, by virtue of its construction, to be the object of a vital activity, to be regularly moved by it.[88]

What this means in general may be surmised by reflecting a moment upon the common characteristics of all the idealistic systems of the day. They start with "the Idea"—something very high, very divine, very vague, very dark, very deep, very mysterious. No attempt is made to prove the truth of the Idea; that would be superfluous. Then the Idea "unfolds," "develops," "manifests itself" in nature and history. Somewhere in the history of its development there is room to fit in every fact of science, and every philosophical theory, religion, or political system that has ever existed. And as it develops, behold! it becomes clear! Yea, even plausible! But try to reverse the process, and proceed from the developments back to the principle, and all becomes murky and doubtful once more; for, as Bautain frankly admits, in the method of nature the deductive movement is less difficult than the inductive.

The first is mysterious at the starting-point, and grows clearer and gains in self-evidence more and more as it descends, for it is *progressive*—a natural development of the life-principle. The second is evident at the starting-point; it folds itself up and loses its self-evidence as it remounts, for it is regressive—return of the life-principle.[89]

The logic of Romanticism has remained for the most part shrouded in protective obscurity. Essentially dogmatic, mystical, and non-argumentative, it tried to conceal the fact by argumentative subtleties; and how well it succeeded, we may judge from the ponderous tomes produced by its latest expositors. Stirling's *Secret of Hegel* is perhaps the classic example. It was the great merit of Bautain to expound with complete frankness and naïveté the principles on which most of his contemporaries were proceeding without daring to admit it. While Hegel devotes many a thorny page to the discussion of the proposition *Being is*, Bautain calmly sets it up as the keystone of his logic, remarking that, as the only absolute and universal proposition, it is "above all discussion."[90]

[88] *Phil. Théol. et Math.*, FB,V10, § 1, note 1.

[89] FB,B5 § 160.

[90] *Ibid.*, §§ 77-79.

Where others deduce the consequences of their lofty first principles step by step, with painful logicality, Bautain simply exhibits them with a wave of the hand. "Woe to him who tries to demonstrate! It is the original vice of man. Man wishes to create science instead of seeing it. Let things demonstrate themselves."[91] He is not even willing to *define* his most important terms.

> Man can define in speech [he says] only what is circumscribed, determined by nature, or what he has himself determined according to the form or extent of his mind. . . . Nothing that cannot be perceived by the senses . . . can be embraced by the reason, and hence it cannot be defined in speech. Thus neither the mental that is in the physical, nor the psychic, much less the divine or that which partakes of the infinite, can be determined or *defined*. . . . Truly scientific doctrine does not proceed by definitions; it proceeds by the simple setting forth of the name which represents the object of the science. One defines neither the mathematical point, nor arithmetical unity, nor physical force. One tells, to be sure, what these things are *not;* one never tells what they are.[92]

The Mennaisian gives an amusing burlesque of Bautain's tactics in the classroom, which in spite of its obvious exaggeration, brings out the practical consequences of this non-argumentative logic most vividly:

> "Gentlemen [he makes the Master say], by means . . . of an effort of induction, generalization, and reflection, I have made me a principle. I have another principle which I did not create myself, but which came down to me out of a higher sphere. Gentlemen, admit my principles."
>
> "Come [answer the pupils] review before us the series of operations by which you have arrived at your empirical principle; tell us what the certitude of the other rests upon."
>
> "That is not the question, Gentlemen. Admit my principles."
>
> "But we cannot reasonably admit them without knowing whether they are certain."
>
> "Gentlemen, admit my principles, or there shall be no instruction for you; you shall not get my *science*."
>
> ". . . At any rate, it is sufficient for us to admit your principles as *hypotheses*."
>
> "Gentlemen, one must *believe* in the principle. What is necessary at this point is an act of frank adherence, an act of *faith* pure and simple; no reasoning, no discussion, no disputing."

[91] *Ibid.*, §§ 101-119.

[92] *Ibid.*, §§ 101-110.

"But you had promised to lead us to faith by means of knowledge. It is no longer the time, you said,[93] to impose the truth by authority. That was a bait, then, by which you were trying to allure us?"

". . . You have had faith in physical force and the mathematical point; otherwise there would have been for you neither physics nor geometry. Nevertheless the mathematical point is quite absurd, rationally speaking. One must therefore begin by *believing* in the principle of the science, however obscure, however mysterious it may be. Gentlemen, it is necessary to believe in my principle. . . . Gentleman, take my balm."[94]

There is just one thing about this burlesque which is really unfair. Bautain *was* willing to have his principles taken as *hypotheses*. The faith which he demanded of his auditors at the start was not the faith to which he hoped to lead them. It was no more than the adoption of a provisional assumption—a practise, as he points out, from which it is impossible to escape.

And if someone should come and say to us that it does not befit the dignity of the philosopher to admit at the start, as a principle, a proposition *(parole)* which he has not verified, we should reply that you *must* begin by admitting something, whatever school you belong to, and that no philosophical explanation will ever be possible without some *datum*, set up at the start, but destined to be justified by the explanation itself.[95]

We have said that the logic of the intelligence might best be termed "the logic of organism." If we try to grasp the main philosophical *apperçu* which underlies the eccentricities of Bautain's logic, we shall in fact discover that it is the perception of the inadequacy of modern descriptive science, with its mechanistic and atomistic tendencies, to deal with living organisms. The picture of multitudinous billiard-balls endlessly bumping one another in chains of mechanical cause and effect is quite a falsification of what goes on in every organism. It is not unnatural to conclude that a new type of logic is needed to deal with organisms: a logic wherein the cause grows, expands, evolves, in passing into the effect; a logic wherein each proposition is organically related to all the rest, and helps to prove the very propositions which help to prove it, as each organ in the body helps to sustain the organs which help to sustain it; a logic which, instead of crawling over the

[93] *Ens. Phil. F.*, 76.
[94] *Ens. Phil. B*, 519-525.
[95] *Ens. Phil. F*, 95.

surface of things with compass and dividers, boldly plunges to the heart of things, identifies itself with the life of things, and then looks toward its external starting-point through the very eyes of the phenomenon it is studying; which, finally, instead of trying to build the structure of metaphysics from the ground up, brick by brick, out of inferences from phenomena, boldly soars into the empyrean, and looking down upon phenomena from heaven's height, describes what it sees.

If this seems fantastic—and all revolutionary proposals seem fantastic at first—let us remind ourselves that the philosophy of the last century has actually been based upon the principles here suggested. It has been dominated by the idea of *evolution*. When we want to explain anything, we tell its history, we treat it genetically; we speak of the "evolution" of planetary systems and social institutions in the same breath, and our systematic philosophers, like Herbert Spencer, will make us a pat formula which applies equally to both. And where is the logical justification for such an evolutionary formula? Is it not as Bautain says? "You must follow it in its developments, in its consequences, in all its applications to the life of man and of nature; and this will give you the demonstration or exposition of all that is in it, as the tree is known by its fruits."[96] Judged by this test of *applicability to the facts*, Bautain's evolutionary formula—polarization in response to and in constant dependence upon external stimulation—is fully as worthy of respect as any that has been proposed. If it does violence to the facts of physics, Spencer's formula does violence to all *but* physical phenomena, and Bergson's formula, which, like Bautain's, is drawn from the biological realm, does violence to the facts of biology themselves, in that the rôle of external stimuli is not sufficiently recognized. And might we not insist, with Bautain, that all of the evolutionary formulae of the century, from Fichte's and Schelling's to Spencer's and Bergson's, have been the product not of logical reasoning, but of intuition, of "intelligence"?

3. *Reason and faith:* Bautain as a fideist.

Bautain is most often referred to as a "fideist," and his philosophy

[96] *Ibid.*, 82, note.

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goes by the name of "fideism."[97] This is perfectly appropriate, for the priority of faith is perhaps the most characteristic of his teachings. He never tires of repeating that "in everything one must begin by believing." But fideism has become a heresy; and whenever a doctrine is pronounced heretical, there ensues a curious process of unconscious equivocation whereby the original doctrine is made much worse than it really was. Those who feel most sympathy with the doctrine in question proceed at once to distinguish their own position from the heretical position; and, in so doing, they caricature the heresy. This is what has happened in Bautain's case. His doctrine of the priority of faith is no doubt vulnerable and open to criticism; but it is far more reasonable than it has been painted. By "faith" Bautain never meant *fides implicita*, "blind faith," the *credo quia absurdum* of Tertullian. When contrasting faith with reason, he always meant one of three things: *willingness to make assumptions*, *receptivity*, or *dawning perception of truth*.

(1). *Faith as willingness to make assumptions.*

We need make little comment on this first meaning of faith; for the Mennasian's burlesque should have prepared us to understand it. Bautain's whole logic is one long insistence upon the necessity for making assumptions, and proceeding upon unproven hypotheses. The axioms of rationality are not susceptible of rational proof; the fundamental principles of all the sciences are unproven; the existence of the self must simply be accepted as a *datum* of experience, and the existence of God, the "absolute major premise" of all reasoning, cannot be proved by reasoning. Intelligence can *see* the validity of these assumptions, and their validity can then be *exhibited* in orderly fashion by the reason; but reason, as reason, must simply take them "on faith," believing the affirmations of the intelligence, which it can neither prove nor disprove.

[97] The "fideism" of Bautain and other Catholic thinkers should be carefully distinguished from the "fideism" of Eugène Ménégoz, the friend and colleague of Auguste Sabatier, which consisted in the doctrine that man is saved "by faith, independently of beliefs." See his *Publications diverses sur le fidéisme*, Paris, Fischbacher. The two fideisms have nothing in common but their anti-intellectualism.

(2). *Faith as receptivity.*

To believe, in the most general sense [says Bautain], is simply to let in the truth, and react freely toward it; to believe is the essentially vital act of the human creature in his present state. . . . He is in relation, direct or indirect, with all the existences; he is susceptible, by virtue of his organization, of being affected by them; and is in fact so affected continually. Their impressions stimulate his life-principle *(vie)* and stimulate it to react; he admits them or rejects them. . . .[98]

Having admitted an impression, experienced its impact, and reflected upon it, man has again the choice between harboring it or rejecting it. If he rejects it, it can obviously never develop into a clearly known idea or fact; if on the other hand he accepts it, the first step on the road to knowledge of the experienced object has been taken—and this is belief.[99] "Belief involves the existence of a not-Self in active relation with the Self, and at the same time, the intus-susception of and reflection upon the received impression, in the Self."[100] It includes three moments: In the first, "the object acting upon me, I feel the effect of its action." In the second, "I pay attention to what I experience"—or I fail to. In the third, "reflection gives me the consciousness of what I experience, the consciousness of the modification I am undergoing; whence results belief in the action of an object, and the knowledge of what that object is in relation to me."[101]

You see [he concludes] that knowledge is born of belief, and never precedes it: . . . nothing is more absurd, more contrary to the law of your mind, than the pretention to know, to judge, and to reason before believing. . . . It is clear that it is in default of knowledge and self-evidence that faith is necessary. But that does not mean that the *évidence* and the knowledge of metaphysical verities is impossible, and that faith must always substitute for them. It is the way that leads to them, and the way ends at the goal, where faith becomes self-evidence, knowledge, absolute certitude.[102]

One might say that belief, in this sense, corresponds to the physiological act of accepting food. If a bit of food is once

[98] *Phil. Chr.*, I, 293-295.

[99] Bautain usually restricts the word *foi* to the religious field, and speaks of *croyance* elsewhere.

[100] *Phil. Chr.*, I, 295.

[101] *Ibid.*, 296.

[102] *Ibid.*, 296-297.

accepted, and if the stomach does not rebel against it, it eventually gets worked up into bone and muscle; but the act of acceptance, depending on an instinctive perception of the fact that it meets the organism's need, is the necessary condition of its assimilation. So an act of "adherence," depending upon an instinctive perception of the truth of a proposition or the presence of a reality, is the necessary condition of the assimilation and eventual comprehension of each bit of knowledge. This is why Descartes' "systematic doubt" is so foolish: it cuts one off from so many possible sources of knowledge, not only from tradition and instruction and divine revelation but from the whole objective world. The person who insisted on knowing before believing would be like a child who insisted on testing his mother's milk before tasting it; he never would get to the point of knowing at all. The child's mind develops only because he reacts affirmatively and trustfully to his parents' solicitations, and the pupil progresses in knowledge only as he has confidence in his teacher. "It is necessary, then, in all things, to begin by believing; and faith is the first condition of all knowledge and all philosophy."[103]

(3). *Faith as dawning perception of truth.*

But faith is not merely the first condition of knowledge; it is already knowledge; for were it not for a dim and confused apprehension of the fact that "there is something here which I ought to receive as true," there would be no means of deciding whether to accept or reject the supposed truth which is knocking for admission. Bautain often uses faith in this sense, as equivalent to dim perception of truth, a "taste" or "feeling" for the truth.

We may best bring out this third meaning of faith by comparing faith with intelligence. Both are capable of getting us in cognitive touch with the world of *ideas*. But the idea, says Bautain, is sometimes "felt rather than seen":

> The superior light, which must produce it, descends into the depths of the soul and is absorbed there; and thus cannot be reflected in the intelligence, still insufficiently developed, and therefore incapable of conceiving the idea and embracing knowledge. There results what is called *faith*, which is the root of the idea, as the idea is the principle

[103] *Mor. Ev. P.*, 57.

of knowledge, as knowledge is the basis of doctrine. But let one not be deceived: faith, obscure as it is on account of its depth, is intelligent; it is an intelligence penetrated by the action of the truth, but which is not yet conscious of itself and that which penetrates it; it is an unreflected and hence less brilliant light.[104]

Indeed religious faith, as distinct from mere belief, is *more* intelligent than the intelligence! It relates one directly to a divine world of which the intelligence has only an inkling, as the reason has only an inkling of the intelligible world. In faith, we have a reaction of the soul to the stimulus of a *rayon de l'infini* which springs from the very depths of infinite Being and pierces to the depths of man's being. The consciousness of the activity of this stimulating ray exists only in the soul; it escapes all the secondary faculties, which can neither understand nor control it.

As the brook does not flow back toward its source, so the mind cannot turn back toward the psychic center from which it emanates; the movement of life carries it ever onward; and, when it reflectively considers its feeling and looks into its own depths, it inevitably produces an image which veils those depths by representing them.[105]

But deep down below the mind, in the very depths of the soul, faith is apprehensive of truths which it can hardly explain to the mind. Faith alone clearly grasps the Christian idea of God, the idea of a Triune God of Love; the other faculties can seize it only in its refracted form, as the ideas of Sovereign Good, Universal Truth, and Absolute Beauty. Faith thus opens the eye of the soul to a Holy of Holies where Plato himself never penetrated.

A question of particular interest, in view of the close parallel between Bautain's theory of knowledge and what later came to be called Voluntarism or Pragmatism, is the question of the relation of faith to will. Here and there, one comes upon sentences in Bautain that seem to foreshadow the idea of the "will to believe." For example, he points out that reason and intelligence, or "earthly and heavenly reason," sometimes reach a deadlock which only the will can break. Reason, he says,

cannot . . . be the judge, for it is implicated on both sides of the case.

[104] *Psych. Exp.*, II, 376-377. [105] *Phil. Mor.*, I, 495. See also § 95.

As a matter of fact, it is never reason which does decide, although it is most often employed to proclaim and justify, like a clerk of the court drawing up the *arrêt* after the judge's sentence. The judge of last resort in man is the will, placed between two opposing worlds, and destined to give itself to the one or the other . . . to perform an *act of liberty*.[106]

In every act of intellectual judgment, he says, the decision is due to a

mysterious and innate taste which, from the bottom of our soul, responds spontaneously to all that acts upon it, which says either *yes* . . . or *no*. . . . It is therefore not from the reason, properly speaking, but from the center of the human being, from that which is profoundest, most mysterious in man, that judgments come. . . . It is his will which pronounces the *yes* or the *no*; it alone exercises the sacred function of separator, judge, sacrificer.[107]

The reader will note that, even in this form, Bautain is advocating neither the wager of Pascal, nor Kantian postulation, nor a Pragmatic "venture of faith"—sometimes described as a "leap in the dark." The will decides, on Bautain's theory, *not* because practical exigencies demand a blind decision, but because will is more intelligent than either reason or intelligence. But if we examine Bautain's writings a little more carefully, we shall see that faith and will, though closely connected, are not identical. Faith lies even deeper than the will; it is a reaction of the undifferentiated soul or life-force.

Thus [he says] although there is no faith without a certain adhesion of the will, the will is nevertheless not the mistress of faith; it can neither create it for itself nor stimulate the sentiments which accompany it, any more than it can root it out or destroy it. It comes sometimes in spite of a man, suddenly illuminating him, and all too often the guilty man . . . would like to rid himself of its importunate light, and cannot.[108]

The will cannot determine faith; but faith can determine the will; it is the most powerful of all motives. It leads to action far more directly than other forms of knowledge; one will die for one's faith sooner than for one's clear convictions.

[106] *Psych. Exp.*, I, 217.
[107] *Variétés*, 41.
[108] *Phil. Mor.*, I, 494-495. Cf. *Psych. Exp.*, II, 376.

We have dwelt upon the cognitive aspect of faith; but faith can no more be classified as an act of cognition than as an act of will or a stirring of the emotions. If it is any of these, it is all three. Bautain speaks of it sometimes as a *sentiment*, but again he speaks of the "*sentiment* which issues from it," and declares that "it is at the same time a *sentiment* and a motive of action."[109] In other words, it is a total reaction of the life-principle. If upon the one hand it is the beginning of knowledge, it is upon the other hand the beginning of love and adoration:

> Faith is the beginning of the union of the soul with God, a union whose consummation is love.[110]
>
> Adoration is the most eminently religious fact; it is the completion of the spiritual life, as faith is its beginning.[111]

With such an exalted conception of faith, Bautain very naturally expressed himself in sweeping terms, and roundly asserted that "faith precedes reason." We may, in fact, distinguish six senses in which faith is prior to reason, according to Bautain:

(1). *Logically*, faith is prior to reason; for reason is obliged to take all its axioms and major premises "on faith." In every discussion the reason is obliged to start with principles and axioms which it has had to admit without proof.[112] Faith is here taken in the first sense, as "willingness to make assumptions."

(2). *Psychologically*, faith is prior to reason; for in each cognitive act, the stage of rational elaboration and reflection is preceded and made possible by a stage of vague knowledge or *pressentiment* (faith in the third sense), which in turn is preceded and conditioned by an act of intellectual hospitality (faith in the second sense) whereby the subject exposes itself to the influence of the object.

(3). *Genetically* and *historically*, faith precedes reason; for the age of faith, both in the child and in the race, precedes the age of reason.

(4). *Metaphysically*, faith is superior to reason, inasmuch as faith gets one in touch with ultimate reality, whereas reason is limited to the realm of phenomena.

[109] Cf. *Phil. Mor.*, I, 494, 496, 516.
[110] *Phil. Mor.*, I, 493.
[111] *Ibid.*, 508.
[112] *Avertissement*, Q. 5.

(5). *Epistemologically,* faith is more trustworthy, less liable to error, than reason, and carries with it greater certitude. We shall consider this point shortly, in connection with Bautain's theory of truth and certitude.

(6). *Apologetically,* as a rule, faith precedes reason, in that the unbeliever seldom is led to faith by disputation; on the contrary, he reaches a rational conviction of the truth of religion only after he has opened his heart to the Word of the Gospel (faith in the second sense) and so has arrived at a dim conviction of its truth, which he can hardly explain to himself (faith in the third sense).

In spite of this sweeping assertion of the priority of faith over reason, Bautain is quite willing to grant that, in its place, reason is extremely important, and may even, in certain cases, "precede" faith. When truth has once been apprehended by faith, it needs to "eradiate in the sphere of the reason" in order to be understood; and all systematic instruction is rational.

> We have never meant [he says] to exclude reason from the consideration of metaphysical and moral truths; we have never wished to banish it either from philosophy or from theology. Those who have cast reproach against us have gratuitously ascribed to us an absurdity which is not of our making. It is perfectly evident that wherever man makes use of his powers of thought and of speech, the reason is exercised and applied. Now, how study philosophy or theology without thinking or speaking? It is very evident, again, that to receive teaching or be instructed, one must first be capable of understanding language, which is the necessary medium of instruction; and the reasonable being who makes use of his reason is the only one who can learn to understand speech and utter it. So it is beyond doubt that the exercise of the reason precedes all scientific teaching.[113]

Again, when the Bishop asked him whether reason did not precede faith "in the primary and fundamental questions," Bautain was willing to admit that faith in the specifically religious sense of the word was possible only for a rational being.

> Yes, reason precedes faith. . . . The use of the reason is anterior to

[113] *Simple exposé,* FB,H8 *verso.* Full title: *Simple exposé de la question entre Mgr. l'Évêque de Strasbourg et plusieurs prêtres de son diocèse.* A very interesting document.

faith in the order of time; for faith comes from the hearing . . . of the word, and the comprehension of the word is possible only through the reason.[114]

Finally, Bautain is willing to admit that reason *may* precede faith, in that an unbeliever *may* be led to religious faith by rational arguments. This is not the *normal* order; "among true Christians one believes from the first."[115] But when a man has once drifted into skepticism, one may employ reasoning, in the first place, destructively, to "make him know and recognize his needs, his wretchedness, his ignorance, the contradictions of his nature, the impossibility of solving by reason the problem of his existence";[116] —in other words, one may attack reason with the weapons of reason—and then, constructively, one may show him what an extraordinary rational unity may be introduced into the whole body of human knowledge when the fundamental truths of religion are even provisionally adopted as the first principles of philosophy. Bautain's whole philosophy is in fact a vast rationalization of Christian theology; as his enemies put it: "that same reason so unjustly despoiled of her rights in the order of natural knowledge, comes and takes back the reins of empire in a higher order of things, and in fact finds herself proclaimed supreme judge in matters of faith."[117] It should be noted, however, that the sort of logic with which Bautain attempts to convert the unbeliever is always the "logic of the intelligence." He never descends to the level of the unbeliever; he never attempts to prove his main convictions. He simply *asserts* their truth, and then proceeds to show the glorious consequences which ensue when their truth is once assumed.

Bautain's maturest convictions on the question of faith and reason may be found in a manuscript essay dated 1846.[118] Here the act of cognition is analyzed into three moments: a "transitive" act of faith, which puts object and subject *en rapport;* an "identical" act of knowledge, in which the dim apprehension resulting from faith flares out, as it were, into blazing certitude;[119] and, finally,

[114] *Ibid.*
[115] *Ibid.*, Q. 4.
[116] *Ibid.*
[117] *Rapport a l'évêque,* 13.
[118] *De la Certitude,* FB,V9, §§ 3-7.
[119] "The light was shining at first outside of us; we have let it in and now it lights us up within."

a "conjunctive" act of "reflection" or reasoning, "whereby the intelligence, by virtue of acquired knowledge, seeks to obtain from it new knowledge." Reason, then, is a means of passing from truth to truth, from one cognitive act to another; but at the beginning of each act of cognition, an act of faith is necessary. Even at this late date, six years after signing the general recantation of 1840, and two years after signing another very sweeping set of propositions,[120] Bautain is as firm as ever on this point—at least in his private reflections upon the subject.

> The *conditio sine qua non* of all knowledge of the truth is therefore expressed in the question, "Can you believe?" Whoever says yes, opens a way for himself to arrive at knowledge; whoever says no, isolates himself irrevocably from the truth. Faith is the bridge which leads from the subjective to the objective. . . . Faith thus has only a moment; but at the outset its necessity is absolute. . . . If man had the initiative of the vital movement in himself, he might be able to begin by knowing; but it is not so in the least. He must therefore believe first; he will know later: and, his acquired knowledge revealing to him better yet what he might know, . . . he will invoke it, seek it, attach himself to it again by belief and faith when he finds it.[121]

4. *Reason and revelation:* Bautain as a traditionalist.

In the history of religious thought, the great enemies of traditionalism have been the mystics. They have had a perpetual tendency to appeal from the dogmas of the past to the soul's immediate intuitions; and to dissolve all things historical into a timeless vision of Eternal Truth. What need have they to be *told* the truth, to be instructed in the traditions of men, to delve into musty books? They *see* the truth, and that is enough for them. Now, no one can possibly mistake the fact that Bautain is a mystic. As Professor Baudin remarks, *all* the intuitionisms meet in his philosophy; Platonic intuition of the supersensible ideas, Malebranchian intuition of the idea of Being, psychological intuition of inward realities, moral and religious intuitions of the "heart"—and their common root is mysticism, the conviction that "everything puts us in immediate and personal communication with God, the Being of

[120] As a preliminary to getting Papal approval for the *Communauté de St.-Louis*. See de Régny, 337-338.

[121] FB,V9, §§ 5-7.

Beings; that all our ideas come from Him, lead us back to Him, and finally leave us *seuls à seul* in His presence."[122] How, then, is it possible for Bautain to be a traditionalist? It may sound paradoxical, but I think it can be maintained that his traditionalism is the logical outcome of his mysticism, and grows inevitably out of his peculiar theory of innate ideas. To substantiate this thesis, we shall have to take a glance at his theory of revelation.

We are dealing, remember, with a contemporary of Hugo and Lamartine, Schelling and the Schlegels, Emerson and Margaret Fuller. It was the hey-day of the Romantic epoch, when every artist was a genius, every philosopher was a seer, every reformer was a prophet, and all were "inspired." Let us not be surprised, then, to find that Bautain's theory of revelation is essentially a theory of inspiration, and that he draws no sharp line between the natural inspiration of the poet or genius, and the supernatural inspiration of the prophet or apostle.

A theory of revelation and inspiration is necessary, from Bautain's point of view, because of the existence of *ideas*. Ideas are those fundamental principles and concepts which the reason can neither prove nor disprove, but which it must take for granted. They lie at the root of every science; and, as they descend in stately hierarchy from the Idea of Being, they bind all knowledge into a unified system even as God binds their prototypes, the *Ideals*, into a unified system in His mind. Now, obviously, the reason never could have discovered the ideas; and yet they are current in human thought, and words which represent them are current in human language. How did they become current? Who discovered them?

> It is by the men of genius [says Bautain] prophets, poets, or apostles, as one will have to call them by reason of their more or less pure participation in the spirit of God, that the life of heaven has been communicated to humanity since the beginning, and that this communication is maintained and renewed across the centuries.[123]

The facts to which Bautain points to justify his belief in the

[122] Baudin, *La philosophie de Louis Bautain, Rev. des sciences religieuses,* Strasbourg, Nos. 1 and 2 (1921). Abbrev.: *Baudin, II.*

[123] *Psych. Exp.,* II, 406.

possibility of extraordinary revelations are those same facts which have in recent years given rise to the hypothesis of the subconscious: automatisms, sudden illuminations, visions, auditions, ecstasies. He assigns these mental states to what he calls "Transcendental Psychology"; since they cannot be experimentally (i. e., introspectively) studied.

> The characteristic of these states [he remarks] is precisely that in them man is caught away from the knowledge of himself, that he loses momentarily what is called "presence of mind" or self-consciousness, and thus all means of internal observation are thereby removed.[124]

Bautain's theory is that all such phenomena are due to direct communication between the soul or intelligence and supersensible reality, without the use of the sense-organs. "Man," he says, "as he appears to us, has, like all the existences belonging to the sphere we inhabit, a clear side and an obscure side." What strikes the senses and is worked up by the reason belongs to the "clear" side; "what passes through the sieve of our organs without affecting them, what our senses cannot seize, what our reason cannot compare, we call obscure, dark, incomprehensible, metaphysical—expressions which are just about synonymous in present-day speech."

To the reason, of course, such supersensible perceptions are a stumbling-block. "The reason of the learned calls these latter empty or mystic dreams, products of a disordered imagination, and rejects them with disdain. The reason of the ignorant and credulous cries 'Prodigy!' and sees in them an exception, a deviation, or suspension in what it calls the laws of the universe." Bautain regards them "neither as prodigies nor as vain imaginations, but as realities which have their seat or basis in the original nature of man, and their cause in the relationship in which he stands to all that exists."

Since all Nature, all Reality, is organically related, whatever exists and whatever happens in any part of the Universe must cause at least some slight reverberation throughout the whole. "Irritable nerves sense all the mutations of the atmosphere beforehand. All the great upheavals of nature act mysteriously upon man before bursting out before his senses." Such physical *pressensations*, as

[124] *Ibid.*, I, 111.

Bautain calls them, are hints of the possibility of spiritual *pressentiments*, which, like them, are felt only by unusually sensitive individuals. The man of strong reasoning ability usually has an "energetic will in a robust body." His very force of concentration, while it makes him capable of foresight based on observation and induction, shuts out "the multiplicity of impressions which trouble the reason and render the judgment uncertain or fickle." Impressions which are insensible to him may be sensible to a man of more nervous temperament: "*Le faible pressent davantage, le fort présume et préjuge mieux.*" Seers, poets, and prophets are simply unusually sensitive people, and their visions and mystic intuitions come to them at moments of unusual sensitivity. If the ideas they give to the world are divine ideas—as indeed their content often proves them to be—there is at any rate nothing incomprehensible about the method by which they get them.[125]

By what right, argues Bautain, shall a man deny the possibility of sensations, visions, auditions, etc., the like of which he has never experienced? They may "appear marvelous because they are not ordinary or common," but they may nevertheless be "the natural consequence of the habitual or accidental mode of being of the subject who experiences them," and no more marvellous than the instinctive perceptions of animals, which no human being can share. A man has a right to say that a given vision or a given supersensible reality is not real for him; he has a right to say it is "opposed to common sense" to believe in it; but he has no right to pronounce it illusory, *a priori*.

> For [says Bautain] he presupposes the belief that all that is possible is known to him and to the generality of men, or that vulgar comprehension is the measure of all that is and can be. And if our fathers had said as much, where would our modern discoveries be, and where were the use of all these researches and labors to exploit nature and discover new truths?[126]

Bautain is fully aware of the dangers that beset his position.

> To admit the possibility of visions, and consequently of apparitions, of extraordinary revelations, is it not [he asks] to open the door again to

[125] For all quotations in last two paragraphs, see *Variétés*, 21, 22, 26, 35-37.

[126] *Ibid.*, 30-32.

all the reveries of *mysticism*, to put weapons in the hands of fanaticism, to reaccredit all the superstitions of the Middle Age, to return at long strides toward obscurantism, and all that follows from it?[127]

He admits the danger—in particular, the danger of mysticism of the Quietistic sort—but feels that there are at least equal dangers on the other side: "our enlightened century, as we are pleased to call it, has also its superstitions; . . . reason itself is perhaps but a great superstition which it will some day be necessary to purify and rectify in its turn."[128] Moreover, if by "mysticism" is meant the belief in realities which transcend observation and reason, then science itself is full of mysticism, when it talks of forces, substances, qualities, space, Nature, the mathematical point, and the like. To the empirical psychologist, it is "mysticism" to admit the existence of a self or soul, and yet a psychology without a soul is surely "*quelque chose de très mystique.*" The only philosophy which can escape the charge of mysticism is a thoroughgoing sensualism. In the eyes of Hume, both rationalists and idealists are mystics. In the eyes of rationalism, Platonism is mysticism—and so on. In other words, one escapes the charge of mysticism only by denying the existence of any reality behind phenomena.[129]

All this simply goes to prove the *possibility* of revelation. The *fact* is proved, on the one hand, by the existence of the ideas, which must have come from somewhere, and on the other hand, by the universality of revealed religions and by the testimony of the noble army of poets, prophets, geniuses, seers, and mystics, to whose awe-inspiring words the heart of man instinctively reacts with an acquiescent impulse. If ordinary men condemn the intuitions of the mystics on the basis of *their* experience, "is there not the experience of all these others to fight against theirs?"[130]

According to their degree of susceptibility to influences from the divine and intelligible worlds, men are divided into two great classes, *les hommes de l'infini* and *les hommes du fini*. The second class, which is by far the larger, includes "those who have never felt the *sentiment de l'infini*, who have never conceived the idea of it, and whose will has not been penetrated to its depths by the action of God."

[127] *Variétés*, 32-33.
[128] *Ibid.*
[129] *Mor. Ev. D.*, 156-166.
[130] *Ibid.*

They have heard God spoken of, . . . but the word has struck the ear, and the virtue of the name has not touched the heart. . . . Hence they do not comprehend what they have not experienced, and all that can be said to them in this connection is for them an unknown language to which nothing real corresponds. . . . They are the *hommes positifs* of the world, men of sense, of reasoning, of self-interest, of calculation. . . . They esteem learning for its applications to every-day life; the physical and mechanical sciences are its apogee. . . . They judge the arts by the same measure; the ideal is an abstraction or a revery of cracked brains, it is the folly of artists. In a word, the taste for the finite and the gravitation of this earth animate these men.[131]

The other class, a small and select group, includes those whose "first free reaction" has been a reaction of faith and love toward the influences that stream down to them from the divine and intelligible worlds.

Nothing terrestrial can satisfy them; they tend instinctively toward the infinite, seeking it by every path, and having no taste for what does not offer them its image; they feel, love, think differently from the others, who do not understand them and make fun of them. There is something vague, lofty, profound about them which gives them an air of mystery: they seem to be under the influence of a superior force. When they love, it is for eternity; for their desire does not stop with the limited object which meets their glance, but attaches itself to the ideal of which the reality is but a shadow. Their thoughts have not the savor of the things of earth; but are dominated by the transcendent ideas whence they are derived; and their goal is beyond this world.[132]

Great, then, is the historic rôle of genius!

These elite souls, when they obediently follow the celestial instincts which urge them, are called to do great things among men; for they are like reservoirs in which the divine influence is stored, into which the life of heaven flows, thence to pour itself out by divers channels upon humanity which it fecundates, upon the earth which it renews. They are . . . mirrors reflecting the eternal Light, which reflect upon the world the warmth and brightness of heaven, augmenting the glory of the Sun of our Spirits, and the happiness of those It bathes with Its rays.[133]

It is the Idea which makes the world march, and when it is weighted

[131] *Phil. Mor.*, I, 525-526.
[132] *Ibid.*, 522.
[133] *Psych. Exp.*, II, 393.

down under the form, oppressed by the letter, everything remains stationary, motionless, dead, in human affairs. But if there comes a new outpouring of the idea, the reanimated Spirit gets the upper hand; it breaks its shackles and bestirs itself to reach the new goal that it glimpses. That is why the vulgar always find something unaccustomed and strange in the genius. At first they make fun of him, then they wonder at him, when he sets to work, and at last they fear him, because he necessarily shakes so many established things, because he disturbs men's interests and passions. . . . Humanity advances to its goal only by virtue of suffering and by a path of blood; genius and charity incessantly furnish victims for the great expiatory sacrifice which is to reconcile earth with heaven.[134]

But even the aristocracy of genius is not a homogeneous group. All are inspired in a sense, but there is a difference between the poet and the prophet, between the secular genius and the bearer of the divine Word.

There are two principal avenues, says Bautain, by which humanity has come into possession of *ideas.* The first avenue is the "*coup d'oeil* or insight of genius." "A single insight of this kind," he observes, "gives great light to humanity, because it gives us an idea, and there is nothing more alive or more fruitful than the idea, for science as well as for conduct." The other avenue is divine revelation in the strict sense.

From the beginning and throughout the course of the ages, God has manifested himself to men. He has enlightened some of them with a supernatural light; he has revealed to them the universal truths without which society, science, and human life are impossible; and their task was to announce them to their fellows. These chosen men have thus been prophets or apostles; and, like the men of genius who have been able to seize certain of these truths by intellectual intuition, they have said simply, positively, dogmatically, what they have seen or heard. . . . These are the two principal means by which, in all times, men have been able to arrive at the *idea;* and it is a great boon, when these two means coöperate for the same end, the greatest possible manifestation of the truth, like two mirrors which augment the brilliancy of the light by reciprocal reflection.[135]

Psychologically, it is a bit difficult to define the exact difference between these two types of inspiration. Both are characterized by the *involuntary, automatic, unexpected, unreflective* nature of the

[134] *Psych. Exp.,* II, 406-407. [135] *Ibid.,* I, 102-103.

experience. As Bautain describes the three stages in the inspiration of the genius—*illumination,* when the "superior light" floods in upon the soul; *conception,* when the light is welcomed in, and the *idea* is conceived; *inspiration* proper, which "presses him to realize what he has conceived," and keeps him in agony till the idea is brought to birth—one can hardly imagine in what different terms he would describe prophetic inspiration.[136] Nor is it easy to see any absolute psychological distinction between the secular inspiration of the genius and the types of divine revelation which Bautain enumerates: "illuminations on the mysteries, flashes of light in the midst of contemplation, the manifestation of divine ideas, the sense of truth opening itself in the apostles, in the doctors of the Church, insights, ecstasies, ravishments of holy souls," and, finally, revelations "through deep feeling and in the will," which manifest themselves in "those supernatural moments which take the soul out of itself, render it capable of sacrificial love, inflame its zeal, redouble its courage."[137] If there is anything in this list which clearly transcends the capacity of the secular genius, it is, apparently, this last type of inspiration; and that, perhaps, makes possible a certain psychological distinction: genius and prophet have exactly similar intuitions of the *intelligence;* but the prophet has, in addition, what might be called intuitions of the *soul,* which, though they are less clear and luminous than the intuitions of the intelligence, are much more profound. The genius *sees* clearly; but sight only reaches surfaces. The prophet and mystic *feel* or *taste* obscurely; but they are in touch with ultimate reality. In their experience, that which is deepest in man, the will, meets that which is deepest in reality, God's Will, in an ineffable union of love.

It would appear, then, that revelation, as Bautain conceives it, is nothing external to the usual processes of cognition, but simply a widening of them, in the cases of persons of exceptional sensitivity and responsiveness. Its source is external, of course, in the divine will to communicate the truth to man, and in the divine light or Word which makes superior knowledge possible. As the presence of the eye and the physical object are not enough to produce knowledge without physical light as a medium, so the presence

[136] *Ibid.,* II, 404-407. [137] *Cerc. Cath.,* 45.

of the intelligence and the intelligible object are not enough without "the intelligible Light" as a medium.[138] But, says Bautain, "External revelation, the Word, is a necessary but incomplete means of communicating to us the knowledge of God. Something more is necessary; we must feel the inward action of the divinity. Then there is no more doubt, but inmost conviction and profound certitude."[139]

The distinction between the Light and the Word is worth dwelling on, for it reveals the link between Revelation and Tradition in Bautain's thinking. As Revelation takes place in the mind of the genius or prophet, it is Light. "The genius who sees has the unshakable certitude of what he sees."[140] But if that Light is to pass over into the minds of other men, it must pass through the medium of language: "if the eye is the organ of the immediate perception of light, the ear receives it mediately."[141] The Light then cloaks itself in the Word:

> He announces it; he says to men, "Here is the truth"; and when he demonstrates it, it is by the knowledge he deduces from the idea, or by the masterpiece which gives the idea its form. But, before this demonstration, he can announce it only by the word, and his word carries in it its light and its virtue. Some receive it and see by it, because they believe the genius; others understand only after the proof by works; others, finally, never comprehend.[142]

The truth then, is self-evident when first revealed to the genius, and again self-evident when it is accepted and tested by the common man. As it comes to the common man in the shape of *tradition*, it commends itself by its external authority; but, except for the spiritually crippled, the truth will eventually come to shine by its own unreflected light.

> The final limit of all discussion is *évidence*.[143] *Évidence* is the judge of every controversy. There are men who do not have it and cannot have it, who are deprived of the organ of *évidence*; it is their misfortune.[144]

Up to this point, Bautain's theory of revelation has been a clear

[138] See *Phil. Chr.*, Letter 16.
[139] *Ens. Phil. B.*, 598.
[140] *Psych. Exp.*, I, 311.
[141] *Phil. Chr.*, *loc. cit.*
[142] *Psych. Exp.*, I, 311.
[143] I know of no translation of *évidence* less clumsy than "self-evidentness."
[144] *Ens. Phil. B.*, 599.

and consistent mysticism or illuminism, not so very different from that of Emerson and other Transcendentalist and Romanticist writers. Verbal tradition enters into the scheme only to convey the mystic light from the inspired genius to posterity; the Light precedes the Word. But when Bautain comes to trace the history of Revelation, and the stages in its development, we suddenly feel ourselves in a totally different atmosphere, and the Bonaldian influence is clear.

The principle of recapitulation, in which Bautain believes profoundly, demands that the evolution of revealed Truth in the race shall be precisely parallel to the evolution of revealed Truth in the individual. Now, no man is born a full-fledged prophet or genius. He begins by assimilating truth that is handed down to him by tradition, by the Word. It is only later on, as he ponders upon the Word, that the Light begins to dawn. The man who grows up apart from tradition and society never develops intelligence. Accordingly, it seems impossible to Bautain that the first men can have been such an enlightened race of geniuses as de Maistre, for example, describes. They must have been children, needing to be taught by the Word, as children are taught. This is the reasoning which lies back of Bautain's acceptance of the Bonaldian theory of a verbal primitive revelation:

> It must have been so, for the divine Word is the first condition of the intellectual and moral development of mankind. . . . Hence the first man had to have a teacher; he had to be spoken to, that he might speak; it is God, says the Scripture, who first spoke to Adam.[145]

This seems in part to reverse the relations of tradition and mystic illumination. The original body of revelation was not luminous at all; it was given to man as hearsay knowledge. The patriarchs, too, were instructed by the Word, and were far from understanding what they obediently passed on. Then came the stage of the written *law*. It was only with the prophets that the Light began to dawn which at last broke forth triumphantly in Christ, to be forever perpetuated through the illumining gifts of the Holy Spirit, working in the Church. Thus, after all, tradition precedes inspiration, as faith precedes knowledge.[146]

[145] *Cerc. Cath.*, 46-47. [146] *Ibid.*, § IX.

The Bonaldian theory of language certainly introduced much confusion into Bautain's philosophy, and one wishes he had never accepted it, for he never properly harmonized it with the rest of his thinking. It was one of the merits of Gratry to ignore the Bonaldian element in his master's philosophy; whereby he achieved a far more consistent system than Bautain ever did. It should be noted, however, that, even in his worst moments, Bautain never makes Revelation a purely mechanical and verbal process. The faith which accepts the Word is never a blind faith; for Bautain, unlike de Bonald, believes every normal individual has an innate capacity to recognize the Truth, or at least to "taste" it, when it is presented to him. All but the spiritually deficient or morally perverse are capable of testing the truth of religious tradition for themselves. To that extent, Bautain's traditionalism is more democratic than de Bonald's, while, on the other hand, it is much more aristocratic than Lamennais's; for Bautain, unlike Lamennais, is not willing to grant to all men an equal spiritual capacity, or trust to a majority vote in matters of theology. Catholicism, he insists, can never accept "common consent" as the criterion of its truth:

> To the eye of true faith, of that living faith to which divine Light alone can give birth in the soul, the testimony of men, however numerous they may be, is not worth one single divine testimony, as all human reasonings are nothing before a manifestation of the Spirit of God.[147]

The real inner consistency between Bautain's traditionalism and his intuitionism has never been properly grasped. One of the most intelligent of his critics, Ferraz, complains that Bautain's traditionalism simply destroys his intuitionism.

> One would suppose, to listen to Bautain, that God cannot act directly *(seul)* and inwardly upon us, and that, in order to speak effectively to our inner ear, He needs to have some one speak to us at the same time from the outside. It is the ancient doctrine of the *Logos* and the *Maître intérieur* ruined by the recent theory of language; it is Platonism and Augustinianism alloyed with Bonaldism.[148]

[147] Letter on Common Sense, *Rev. Eur.*, VI, 656.

[148] Ferraz, *op. cit.*, 338.

Now, Ferraz has detected the historical antecedents of Bautain's theory with admirable perspicacity; but he has utterly failed to understand the theory itself. Bautain's whole theory of revelation is based upon the possibility of direct and immediate communication between what is inmost in man and what is inmost in Reality. He objects strenuously to any form of traditionalism which, like Lamennais's "incessantly interposing a human authority between man and the facts, shuts him off from access to them."[149] He addresses his teaching precisely to those who "wish *évidence* and not authority, who wish to see the truth for themselves and not receive it on the testimony of another."[150] He emphasizes the importance of language and tradition for just two reasons: first, because the individual's powers of cognition develop only in society, by contact with the social concepts embodied in language; and secondly, because men's cognitive powers are not equally developed, so that the average man must bow to the superior insight of genius. Both of these reasons carry us back once more to Bautain's general formula for the life-process; for they remind us once more that each individual creature develops his capacities only when he exposes himself to the stimulating influence of other creatures in a more advanced stage of development. Man is an *être enseigné;* if he refuses to avail himself of the experience of his predecessors, he will never be wise; if he is unwilling to see through the eyes of those who see more clearly than himself, he will never learn to see for himself at all; if he will know God directly, he must first know Him indirectly.

All this, as we said at the start, is of a piece with Bautain's theory of innate ideas. If Bautain had maintained the *tabula rasa* theory of the infant mind, he might have been led (like de Bonald) to a purely externalistic and mechanical theory of revelation. If, on the other hand, he had maintained that the child possesses certain ideas, full-fledged, prior to all experience, he could not have been a traditionalist at all. But since he maintained a more reasonable theory than either of these—the theory, namely, that the child is born with certain innate *capacities,* which develop only through social intercourse—he was led to assign to tradition a most important rôle, which nevertheless is transitory: the rôle of the peda-

[149] *Ens. Phil. F.,* lvii *et seq.* [150] *Ibid.,* lxii.

gogue, who stands between the child and the facts not to conceal but to reveal, and who steps aside when mediation is no longer necessary.

What then is the final upshot of Bautain's critique of the reason? To answer that question, we shall need to distinguish between several different senses in which Bautain uses the word "reason." He is, in fact, not altogether clear or consistent in his terminology at this point; and this was undoubtedly one reason why his controversy with the Bishop got nowhere.

(1). *Reason as equivalent to reasoning.*

This definition was forced upon Bautain by the Bishop's first question: "Do you think that reasoning alone is not sufficient to prove with certitude the existence of the Creator, and the infinity of his perfections?" Understanding this in the light of his psychology, Bautain of course returned an emphatic negative. How, for a fact, can the reasoning process "alone" establish anything at all, if it is true, as Bautain insists, that the reasoning process rests back upon the judging process and the conceiving process, which in turn rest back upon the data furnished by the senses? *Contact with reality* must precede the reasoning process, if knowledge is to be gained through it. Logic alone, working *in vacuo*, has nothing cognitive about it. "Reason alone, by reasoning alone"—that is, induction and deduction divorced from perception and judgment—how could reason, so defined, be conceived to establish the existence of *anything?* Logic is not an existential science; the syllogism is not an instrument of discovery. It is like the carpenter's square, an "instrument for verifying the correctness of a construction already made."

> The use of the square presupposes plan, law, and materials; the use of the syllogism presupposes the axiom, and fully formed images, concepts, and notions. The square gives neither plan nor materials; the syllogism gives neither idea nor concept of any reality, nor the objectivity of what exists in nature outside of the mind. Both simply show the just or false relations between two positions or propositions set over against each other, or following one from the other.[151]

[151] *Variétés*, 16.

(2). *Reason as equivalent to discursive thought, or reasoning applied to the data of the five senses.*

This is the definition which the Mennaisian critic accepts as a basis of discussion.

> By reason, M. Bautain understands that active faculty by which we combine ideas, think, judge, reason, make abstractions, and generalize. *We* adopt that word, in a much broader sense, for the faculty of knowing, the intelligence under all its forms, whether M. Bautain calls it *mind, understanding, reason,* or *intelligence.*[152]

Most of Bautain's opponents probably supposed him to be attacking reason in this broader sense when he was really attacking only *discursive* reason. His distinction between intelligence and reason passed unobserved. As we have seen, his critique of discursive reason insists upon its incurable tendency to reduce concrete and organic reality to a series of disconnected *abstractions.* Kant's judgment of it was quite correct; it is a purely phenomenal and subjective faculty, and its views of reality are simply convenient points of view.

> The legitimate sovereignty of the reason does not therefore extend beyond its own horizon, beyond its own limits, or the ideal world it creates for itself, by means of the materials it receives from without. Its empire is subjective, and in no wise objective. It has no more right to command another reason than it has to command nature.[153]

If, therefore, we can escape from the phenomenal world, it is only by virtue of a superior faculty, the intelligence, which seizes at a glance the genetic order and nature of things. Unless reason accepts all its major premises, with unquestioning docility, on the authority of this higher faculty, it always goes astray.

(3). *Reason as equivalent to mind.*

The two definitions already given are the only ones which Bautain commonly employs. He is accustomed to slip back and forth between them, in a somewhat disconcerting manner, as the exigencies of the argument require. But it will help us to complete our summary of his critique of the reason if we temporarily

[152] *Ens. Phil. B.*, 482. [153] *Variétés*, 14.

adopt the Mennaisian's definition of reason, as equivalent to *mind* in the most general sense, including sensation, conception, judgment, reasoning, and *intelligence*. Supposing that the Bishop had asked Bautain whether "reason alone," so defined, was capable of proving the existence of God and the infinitude of His perfections, what would have been his reply? I have not the slightest doubt that he would still have replied in the negative; for in his view even the intelligence is not man's highest cognitive faculty. Mind is but a secondary function of the will or the soul; and if the intelligence is cognizant of the existence of God, it is not capable of plumbing the depths of His nature and the "infinitude of His perfections." Only by faith, by the soul's loving reaction to the Eternal Love, is the true God known; the "God" who lies at the end of a rational argument is an empty abstraction, and even the God of Plato, intuitively grasped by the insight of genius, is a cold Ideal. Yes, in another sense, even the soul, "alone," cannot know God. "Alone," man is helpless. Take him apart from his environment, apart from society, apart from Nature, apart from the stimulating influences which God rains down upon him continually, and, just in proportion as he relies upon his own "absolute spontaneity" and shuts himself up to these external stimuli, he becomes incapable of real knowledge.

To sum up: neither reasoning "alone," nor discursive thought "alone," nor mind "alone," nor the whole soul of man, so far as it remains "alone," can know or do anything at all. The pretension to independence and autonomy is folly; the path to true knowledge is the path of dependence, of receptivity, of faith and docility. This is the central idea of Bautain's philosophy; is it any wonder that the Bishop's question aroused his ire?

## II

## Bautain's Theory of Truth and Certitude: His Semi-Pragmatism

It was Lamennais who had made the subject of "certitude" the storm center of philosophical discussion among French Catholics. The acrimoniousness of the discussion was in part due to a confusion of terms. To say that the common consent of mankind

was the "criterion of certitude" might mean either that it was the best and most certain test of objective truth, or that it gave the greatest subjective *feeling* of certitude. Lamennais believed himself to be proving the former when he was only proving the latter.

Bautain, while not always free from a similar confusion of terms, at least made a conscious effort to avoid it. "Certitude," as he defines it, "is absolutely subjective"; it is "the end and final outcome of all logical operations,"[154] a "firm assurance that we have the truth," a state of "calm and full security" ensuing upon a period of action and reaction between "truth" and "the intelligence."[155] It is, to be sure, a state which cannot be defined without including "the clear consciousness . . . that it is really the truth to which we are attached, and that we run no risk of deceiving ourselves";[156] but, when speaking of certitude in the objective sense, Bautain usually prefers to speak of "truth." We may therefore divide our discussion of his theory of truth into three main sections: the meaning of truth; the psychology of certitude; and the criterion of truth.

1. *The meaning of truth.*

What is truth? Does it exist independently of man's mind, or does it not? One might expect Bautain to be a relativist, for in his method of *testing* truth, as we shall see in a moment, he is very much of a pragmatist; but we cannot too strongly emphasize the fact that in his theory of the *nature* of truth he has not the slightest tincture of pragmatic relativism. Like Professor Royce, he might call himself an "absolute" pragmatist. Though he holds truth to be found through the will, and tested by its practical consequences, he nevertheless insists that truth is really *found*, and not *made*.

In defining truth, one is first faced with the problem of differentiating "truth" from "being" or "reality." "Can one legitimately identify reality with truth," asks Bautain, "and affirm purely and simply that what is, is true?"[157] Obviously not, for truth implies relation of being with intelligence, as light implies relation of the luminous object with a seeing eye; and truth would

[154] *Ens. Phil. B.*, 608.
[155] FB,V9, §§ 1 and 2, *De la Certitude.*
[156] *Ibid.*
[157] FB,V9, *Sur la Verité.* All the following quotations are from the same source. The essay is brief; and I have reproduced the whole of it, in substance.

as surely cease to exist, if intelligence vanished, as light would, if all the existences on the globe were blind. Reality apart from its relation to intelligent beings can no more be called true than reality apart from its relation to beings endowed with "taste" and "feeling" can be called good. "Being, the true, and the good, are identical in substance, but different in their relation."

But this does not mean that truth exists only in men's minds!

> All truth is . . . independent of the caprices and imaginations of man, superior to the arbitrary combinations of the reason; and it is a fatal mistake to believe that one cannot find truth except in human speech or thought.

It is the divine intelligence which gives things their truth, as it originally gave them their reality: "The different existences in their diverse relations are like the words and propositions of a sublime discourse pronounced by God." Every reality corresponds to a thought in God's mind, which "makes it what it is"; and its truth in this higher sense, is its degree of correspondence with the divine ideal. When things become evil they become "false" in this sense.

> What really is, has therefore more truth than a logical proposition can have, and the truth of the thought as it faces the reality can only be conceived as truth by participation.

The phenomenal world which lies between the divine intelligence and the human intelligence thus has "truth" in different senses by virtue of its double relation to mind. Bautain compares it to "a magnificent edifice, whose plan was traced by a skilful architect, and which others later come to admire and study to comprehend its ensemble, its ordonnance, its purpose, its proportions," or to "a stone chiselled by an artist, which leaves its imprint upon all sorts of materials," by looking at which one can "understand the thought which inspired the artist at the moment when he was handling the chisel."

> It is pure idea at the beginning [he says] in the architect or the artist; it is again idea in those who contemplate the imprints or the edifice: between these two ideas stands the reality, which takes its origin from

the first, which gives birth to the second. Its relation to the first is necessary; that is, it exists only by and for that idea. . . . Its relation to the second is fortuitous and accidental; that is, it subsists and remains the same whether it is understood or is not understood. . . . Thus substantial, ideal, real, logical, and spoken truth are the five degrees of the manifestation of the true, or the revelations in the order of nature of the absolute Truth who is God.

Substantial truth is God's self-knowledge; with Him, at least, reality and truth, knower and known, are one. Ideal truth is the perfect correspondence between the ideal world and the divine Mind; real truth is the degree of correspondence between the objects of the phenomenal world and the divine ideals which they ought to copy. Logical truth is measured by the degree of correspondence between man's thought and the phenomena it attempts to describe; spoken truth, finally, is measured by the degree of correspondence between man's speech and his thought.

2. *The psychology of certitude.*

How can mere mortals ever be *certain* that their copies of objective truth are correct? Is it not almost inexplicable that certitude, as a psychological state, should exist at all? Yes, says Bautain, it *is* very strange; and we shall never understand it unless we admit that man has something within him which he uses as an infallible criterion of truth.

What is this subjective "principle of certitude"? It is, says Bautain, "the *need* which man has of the truth, of light, without which he cannot live a truly human life."[158] This need is at once practical and theoretical, and so when it feels itself satisfied, the certitude which expresses this satisfaction is at once practical and theoretical: "a conviction carried to the point of excluding doubt entirely and compelling at once the complete adherence of the mind and the firm assent of the will."[159] A certitude which one is not ready to live by and die for is no true certitude. From the subjective point of view, then, truth is what satisfies my *need* of truth, the need which shows itself in "the instinct for knowledge or *curiosity*, innate in man."[160]

The subjective principle of certitude is at the same time very

[158] *Ens. Phil. B.*, 609. [159] *Ibid.* [160] *Ibid.*, 609-610.

peremptory in its authority for the individual, and very inadequate as a social authority, for it is inward and indescribable.

> This principle is the most positive and certain thing in you; it is the condition of all your knowledge, the condition even of your existence, as a reasonable creature. . . . The principle of certitude and certitude itself are within you; they are subjective; no one can be certain for you, any more than you can impose your certitude on another. What answers to this principle, what provokes its development, is the truth. . . . It is always the true outside of you, answering to the need of the true within you. It is the principle of certitude innate in each man, which . . . has its seat in the soul, in the very root of our existence. It is imprinted upon us as a divine stamp, as a permanent testimony, as the soul of the truth; it is the living and incontestable proof of the intimate relation in which man stands to the truth; for, how should he beg for it if he did not feel the need of it? How should he recognize it? How should he say "That is true!" if he had not within him the prototype of the truth?[161]

Perhaps the nature of this mysterious principle may become plainer if we follow Bautain's account of the relation between faith and certitude. It is by virtue of the presence of this innate principle, he says, that the initial act of belief which welcomes the truth from afar off is possible.

> It is in no wise through lack of certitude that man is obliged to believe; it is on the contrary by virtue of the principle of certitude which is innate in him that he feels the need of believing, has the power to believe, is predisposed to believe, and does believe.[162]

On the other hand, certitude never becomes complete while faith wavers.

> Positive certitude, developed and determined, always varies with the degree of adhesion to the interior or exterior word, the degree of *conscience intime* and faith. . . . Thus it is that certitude is at once the foundation and the perfection, the first principle and the crown of faith.[163]

Apparently, the principle of certitude lies even deeper in the soul than does faith itself—and that is very deep indeed!

[161] *Phil. Chr.*, I, 297-298.
[162] *Ibid.*, 297.
[163] *Ibid.*, 299.

In his epistemological works Bautain does not make plain the exact nature of that "need" to which the truth is the complement. He speaks of "innate ideas," potential in the understanding, waiting to be fertilized by contact with the ideals of which they are the imprints, and of which the fully developed ideas are the copies; and we may presume that these innate ideas are a part, or aspect, or outcropping, of the "principle of certitude." But we must go to his "Moral Philosophy" to discover the real secret. There, in an eloquent passage, he speaks of the *besoin radical* of the will, which only the Infinite can satisfy, and which proves that the Infinite has formed it for Itself.

In the chain of Creation, each creature "draws its nourishment from the order of things with which it is most clearly connected, or from the element from which it springs." If, therefore, we know that for which the creature hungers, we know whence it is sprung. Now the soul of man, as well as his body, has an insatiable hunger for nourishment—the will *is* that hunger[164]—and *nothing finite can satisfy it. Ennui* results when it tries to feed upon the finite; it "gnaws and devours the mind, as inanition undermines and consumes the body."[165]

> All the desires of man aspire, therefore, toward the infinite by some path, by some means of art, of knowledge, of justice, of piety, of love. If then the soul can live upon nothing but the infinite, if the infinite alone can satisfy her and sate her hunger, it is because it is analogous to her nature, it is because it is her *principium*, and that is why she naturally tends to return to it.[166]

God is the only food that can satisfy the soul; and whenever a durable satisfaction comes to man in this world it is because he has found some reflection of the divine Beauty, some fragment of the divine Truth, some hint of the divine Goodness.

Since the will is "the natural chief of our faculties," since "we think because we wish to think,"[167] the satisfaction that accompanies all contact with the divine is primarily a satisfaction of the will; but this satisfaction has an intellectual as well as a moral import.

[164] *Phil. Mor.*, I, 47. "Elle [la volonté] est la faim de l'être et de la vie."

[165] *Ibid.*, I, 61. See the whole passage.

[166] *Phil. Mor.*, I, 58-59.

[167] *Ibid.*, I, 51.

By the will, man "communicates with the very source of his being, receiving by that avenue impressions, inspirations, impulses, often inexplicable to the reason, and which justify themselves only by the event."[168] The satisfaction of the need of the mind which proves the presence of Truth is hardly to be distinguished at its source from the satisfaction of the will which proves the presence of the Good; both blend in the soul's satisfaction, which proves the presence of its celestial Mate. Moral conscience and intellectual conscience (the principle of certitude) are one and the same thing. The innate ideas themselves would seem to be a sort of soul-hunger, which only their proper nutriment can sate. The more an idea satisfies my desires, the more certain I feel of its truth.

If the soul's desire is the subjective factor which contributes to produce the feeling of certitude, the *objective* factor is simply the object of cognition itself. The degree of certitude, accordingly, varies with the nature of the object with which the soul is in commerce. *Physical* certitude results when *physical* phenomena impinge, as it were, upon the retina of the soul, and is based on "the consciousness of the effects that these phenomena produce in us or upon us."[169] It is a low order of certitude, since physical phenomena have only a low grade of reality, and satisfy the soul's hunger only temporarily. *Metaphysical* certitude, on the other hand, is perfect certitude, since it is based on the union of the soul with ultimate realities, which completely satisfy its hunger. *Rational* certitude, which results from the soul's commerce with other human beings, and is reached either by weighing *evidence* or by heeding the *authority* of others, would, one might suppose, rank midway between physical and metaphysical certitude; but instead, it ranks below them. That is because certitude varies with another factor, the factor of *immediacy*. It is greatest when the subject is face to face with the object, in a relation of action and reaction. Rational knowledge is at best second-hand knowledge, experience reflected-upon, and the testimony of others is third-hand knowledge. It is for this reason that Lamennais's "common consent" is such an extraordinarily poor "criterion of certitude." Whether a physical or a metaphysical object is in question, one

[168] *Phil. Mor.*, I, 54. [169] *Phil. Chr.*, I, 300.

moment of direct *experience* of the object will do more to convince me of its reality than all the testimony in the world:

"The whole of mankind," said M. Bautain *en pleine séance*, "might come and affirm to me that my conviction, my certitude, was false. I should not give in. My certitude is certitude, and nothing can shake it; no testimony can either produce or destroy that profound conviction which constitutes certitude. Would it follow that the whole human species was mad? . . . (No answer to this question except a gesture of ignorance or resignation). But, if *I* am mad, what good will the testimony of mankind do me?"[170]

3. *The criterion of truth:* Bautain and William James.

So far, we have been dealing with certitude as a mental state. We have indeed discovered that it varies with the degree of objective Truth which the object under consideration embodies; but can we say that the converse is true, and that the accuracy of a proposition varies strictly in proportion to the degree of confidence it inspires in me?

Well, Bautain comes pretty near to saying just that. His ultimate criterion of the truth is the inward testimony of the innate sense for the truth, which he calls sometimes the *sens intime*, sometimes the "conscience," sometimes the "need to believe," and sometimes "common sense," (in conscious contrast with Lamennais's "common sense," which meant common consent). All men have this sense; those in whom it is not developed, miss the truth; those in whom it is developed—or rather *developing*, for truth-seeking is a never-ending process—find the truth just in proportion to their degree of development.

A fatal error of M. de Lamennais and of many other philosophers [says Bautain] is to believe that there is a criterion of Truth so clear, infallible, universal, that one has only to present it, and all men will be forced to admit it. Such is not the way of things. God has made men free, and in all that they knowingly do, their will has its part. No one can be *forced* to believe, or to admit a given truth.[171]

In other words, every man has his own criterion of truth; "man

[170] *Ens. Phil. B.*, 610-611. On physical, metaphysical, and rational certitude, see *Phil. Chr.*, I, Letter 21, and the Essay *de la Certitude*, FB,V9.

[171] Letter to the Abbé Freschard, FB,K, *Cahier* I, 1-2.

is the measure of all things." Does this reduce us to relativism? No, for the Truth is unchangeable, and every man has a soul-hunger which only the Truth will satisfy; but it is only gradually that a man learns what it is that he wants. Error sours eventually on every man's stomach; but it is only through long-continued commerce with the Truth that one learns to discern it *before tasting it.*

If no universal criterion of truth exists, neither does any *external* criterion of truth exist. No authority, however weighty, no rational or logical test, however successful, can distinguish truth from error. Truth bears testimony to itself, and all other evidence is superfluous. Bautain is emphatic and eloquent on this point. I transcribe only two out of many passages:

> Where are we if we demand a criterion of self-evidentness? How do you distinguish daylight from darkness? Do you also need a criterion of day and night?—But there are also "false dawns."—Whatever you do, you cannot dissipate error except by the exposition of the truth; you cannot banish the darkness except by the light.[172]
>
> For what is there that is clearer than the truth? Is a criterion needed . . . for love and friendship? Does not the truth shine brilliantly enough by its own light? Do not the affections—love, friendship—feel each other? When the soul is united in its depths *(par le fond)* to the pure truth, when two souls are in intimate union and act upon each other, what more is needed?[173]

*"Vous avez raison, docteur Pangloss!"* is the Mennaisian's comment on the above. "All is for the best in the best of possible worlds, from which error is banished, where no false friends are met, and where no false lovers have ever been seen!" The possibility of error would indeed seem to be a problem for Bautain; but he has his solution ready:

> It has been said that *sentiment intime* deceives us, that it is the source of the gravest errors, in religion as in philosophy. . . . Feeling, as feeling, and in its native purity, never deceives, any more than sensation does. Nothing on the contrary is more certain for man than what he experiences in his inner self *(for intérieur)*. . . . And the proof of it is in the approbation and the condemnation of the conscience. . . . But

[172] 2nd Letter to Ferry, FB,K, *Cahier* I, 8.

[173] *Ens. Phil. B.*, 621.

when he sets himself to reflecting upon what he feels, in order to give an account of it to himself, when he tries to know his momentary modifications and modes of being, then his reason mingles its operations with that of the truth; it neutralizes it, obscures it, and ruins its effects by reasonings founded on principles drawn from its own depths, and it is then that *private* or *individual sense* is substituted for common sense—that is, for the need and feeling for the truth, common to all men.[174]

We have here an appeal to immediate experience as the criterion of truth which irresistibly reminds one of the pragmatic empiricism of William James. The parallel can be carried out in some detail; in fact, I can think of no better way of explaining the meaning of Bautain's criterion of truth than by comparing it with James's.[175]

Take, first of all, James's familiar proposition that the "truth" of an idea is the experience to which it "leads," the empirical "cash value" it is capable of rendering up; that there is no more validity in each "concept" than there is in its corresponding "percept." Bautain has an exactly similar theory. The first step in the knowing process, as he continually insists, is the learning of social concepts, "faith in the word"; at this stage we "taste" the truth rather than "see" it, and its validity is more subjective than objective; we

[174] *Ibid.*, 618-619.

[175] I do not, of course, mean to imply that James would sponsor all the applications that Bautain makes of the pragmatic principle. Neither do I mean to imply that Bautain is a "pragmatist" in any thorough-going sense. In fact, if the word be taken in the narrow sense which seems to be gaining ground in this country—if the naturalistic pragmatism of John Dewey be taken as the typical form of pragmatism—then it would be absurd to call any Catholic a pragmatist, or even a "semi-pragmatist." It seems to me, however, that the French do well to use the word *pragmatism*, like the word *romanticism* (p. 43 *supra*, footnote 63), in a broader sense, to include several affiliated movements—in this case, to include all forms of voluntarism which appeal to the practical consequences of ideas (either scientific or religious) as a test of their truth. This broader sense of the word is needed, if we are to grant the right of many American religious thinkers, such as Professor Lyman of Union Theological Seminary, to continue to call themselves Pragmatists, while differing widely from the position of Professor Dewey. For this wider use of the word in France, see Berthelot's *Un Romantisme Utilitaire*, Leclère's *Pragmatisme, Modernisme, Protestantisme*, and other books mentioned in the bibliography. For its wider use in American religious thought, see E. W. Lyman's *Theology and Human Problems: A Comparative Study of Absolute Idealism and Pragmatism as Interpretors of Religion*, N. Y., 1910, 40-58, 91-93, 121 *et seq.*, 150-160. Cf. Father Tyrrell, *Through Scylla and Charybdis*, London, 1907, chapter VII on "Pragmatism." The Catholic Modernists were frequently accused of being Pragmatists. All I claim for Bautain is that, on certain specific points, his position *resembles* that of James and other recognized Pragmatists.

accept it because it tastes good *to us*, and answers to our need.[176] But knowledge is not really reached until "taste" gives way to "sight," till mediate experience gives way to immediate experience. Belief and faith, which correspond to physical and metaphysical reality, are the pillar of fire and of cloud, "half obscure, half luminous," which leads to the promised land of self-evidence. It is the "leading" of ideas, in other words, which gives them their truth. The purpose of all instruction about an object, which is verbal and so by faith, is

> to lead us gradually to the self-evidence *(évidence)* of that object, by rendering us capable of seeing it for ourselves, and perceiving all that was told us about it. He who does not reach this vision of the object has not well understood the doctrine; he does not know. . . . It is the vision [percept] of the truth which in the last resort gives authority to the word [concept] of instruction.[177]

The nature of the validating percept of course varies with the nature of the object. For *natural* objects, sense-perception, especially sight-touch perception, is the goal. A single museum is worth a whole city of libraries. *Rational* entities are not objects at all; one can never reach "vision" of them. Vision must come before and after the work of the reason, if reason is to reach valid results.

> Every rational demonstration necessarily starts from self-evidence; it is only on that condition that it obtains it in the conclusion. Thus reasoning is but a passage from self-evidence to self-evidence; deduction is the transportation or communication of light from one clear proposition to another that was not clear.[178]

*Intelligible* objects are never truly known except by the insight of genius. When genius has once "enounced" the idea of the object, "some receive it and see by it," and the fact that it leads them to vision is the test of its truth. Those who are not willing to receive it "on faith" and try it out, of course never reach the knowledge of the intelligible object to which it corresponds. Finally, when we come to the realm of the divine, we are in some difficulty with our test, for the beatific vision of God is reserved

[176] See *Psych. Exp.*, I, § 50.
[177] *Psych. Exp.*, I, 310, 312.
[178] *Ibid.*, 310.

for the next world; but, even in this life, faith may *lead us in the direction of* the beatific vision; and there are certain holy men to whom the "gift of knowledge," one of the "gifts of the Holy Spirit," is granted, rendering them "capable not only of believing in eternal truth, but of understanding it," and having "the *évidence* of it up to a certain point."[179]

Meanwhile, for the rank and file of us, according to Bautain, a test of theological truth is available which again reminds one of William James: it is true, if it answers to our practical needs; if it "tastes" good, and does us good. Truth, he says, sometimes "justifies itself practically *(par le fait)* more than by demonstration." One takes it on faith, and then there arises "an enjoyment, when the object pleases," or "the restoration of the vital energies *(réparation de la vie)*, when it nourishes." Truth has a "savor which recreates and fortifies"; and one can acquire and cultivate a discriminating taste for religious truth just as one can acquire and cultivate a taste for the beautiful in art or literature, or "a certain taste for the good, which, put in relation with something morally good, gives him an agreeable emotion, a savor of justice or of virtue, and at the same time a feeling of power, and a certain stimulus which impels the will toward well-doing." This cultivated taste is *wisdom;* wisdom gets us in touch with deeper realities than *knowledge* can ever reach in this life.[180]

A final point of contact between Bautain and James: they both appeal to "future experience," and "the way things *work*." The pragmatic test of truth is, in fact, a test that never can be applied at the moment of decision. If I am to "taste" a supposed truth and test it by the way it "works" upon my system, I must first swallow it by faith; and if it proves to be a poisonous error, the discovery comes too late to do *me* any good.

The "test of works" is frequently alluded to by Bautain; and he never fails to point out the element of risk which it involves:

> Unfortunately, when the facts speak and decide, it is too late to go back. The consequences are posited and must take their course; it remains only to submit to them, profiting by their instructions for another occasion—and happy those who profit by them! One becomes

[179] *Cerc. Cath.*, 58-59. Bautain is less cautiously mystical in his earlier works.

[180] For all the above quotations, see *Psych. Exp.*, I, § 49, pp. 323-327

wise in this world only at his own risk and peril. The experience of the fathers is almost always wasted for the children.[181]

One is obliged to let them commit the faults that one foresees, that they may acquire by experience the conviction of their error. That is why talent, learning, genius even, cannot take the place of experience, of the practical knowledge of life.[182]

Bautain's pragmatism is not undiscriminating. The test of works, he admits, is not necessary in a "science of pure reasoning," like mathematics; "but," he insists, "where *facts* are concerned, the test of experience is necessary; the thought cannot be finally judged except by the realization of its consequences."[183] Still more noteworthy is the care with which he discriminates between the sort of "workings" or "consequences" by which a religious verity is to be tested and those by which other kinds of truth are to be tested. Pragmatists have commonly been unconscious of the variety of meanings concealed beneath the ambiguity of these terms. We commend the following passage, therefore, to the reader's attention; for we feel that the pragmatic criterion of truth was never better stated:

It is by practice that systems and reasonings are tested, as the tree is judged by its fruits: in things religious and moral by one's conscience and by one's acts; in natural things by common sense and utility; in the arts by taste and the feeling for the beautiful; in social institutions by the well-being or *malaise* of the peoples.[184]

This test [Bautain admits] is dangerous for him who attempts to make it and for all who take part in it. How many systems have we not seen appear and disappear! They try themselves in the real world; if they have not in them the requirements of the truth, they do not hold; for things do not happen in the real order as they do in our understandings, where all sorts of chimeras may find room. Thus were judged those moral, political, and religious doctrines of the eighteenth century which the reason, left to herself, attempted, in her pride and in her great confidence in her own *savoir-faire*, to substitute for the Christian verities. [So also has Saint-Simonism recently been judged.] So long as it remained in the realm of speculation and between the covers of books, the discussion was warm; . . . but when it came down into the field of reality, . . . it killed itself in trying to establish itself. . . .

Let the applications and the practical outworkings appear [he con-

[181] *Psych. Exp.*, II, 139-140.
[182] *Ibid.*, 352.
[183] *Ibid.*, 351.
[184] *Ibid.*, 349-350.

cludes]; let them come, and the event will decide. What is useful will remain after a certain oscillation; what is false or vain will be carried away by the river of time, which rolls oblivion in its waves.[185]

The test here proposed is a more objective test than that of "Does it please me?" or "Does it help me?" There has always, in fact, been confusion among pragmatists as to whether "Does it work?" means "Does it work for me?" or "Does it work in the world of nature and history, in the long run?" Yet, granting that Bautain is here reaching out toward a more objective form of pragmatism, the fact remains that the subjective test is the ultimate one. "The facts" and "future experience" can "decide" only in the sense that they turn out *as I wish*, or *against my wishes*. The final test is, "Does this supposed truth lead to results favorable to me?"

The authority to which Bautain appeals as a court of last resort, then, is a purely individual and subjective authority. What, then, becomes of the authority of the Church! For a Catholic, that is a most crucial question. Bautain attacks it fearlessly, and, I should think, in a manner that ought to satisfy the most zealous of his brethren. In brief, he maintains that the objective authority of the Church is as necessary as the subjective authority of the intellectual conscience; that there is perfect harmony between them; that this harmony can already be perceived in the large, but that in matters of detail, in our present imperfect state, there is often a clash of the two authorities, in which case it is our duty to trust the authority of the Church, and wait for faith to lead us to further light.

But is it not strange to haul in an "objective" authority, when our "subjective" authority speaks so clearly and infallibly? No! for without an objective authority of some sort, our subjective authority would do us no good at all. It is a purely *formal* authority; it can recognize the truth, but it cannot direct us to the truth. It knows what to approve and what to reject when they are set objectively before it, so as to stimulate it and set it in operation; but until then (i.e., *before* the decision, *before* the judgment) it does not know its own mind at all. Man needs a *material* authority "to show him objectively and thus more clearly

[185] *Ibid.*, 351-352.

what he has in his depths."[186] He needs a mirror, as it were, to show him his own mind. Bautain's contention is precisely parallel to Royce's contention, in the *Philosophy of Loyalty:* that although "my duty is simply my own will brought to my clear self-consciousness," nevertheless, "left to myself alone, I can never find out what my will is"; and I get a will of my own "only through social training."[187]

It is impossible to understand the rôle of the authority of the Church in leading man to the truth without first considering the rôle of society and tradition. Man owes to society, says Bautain, three things: *language,* which "lights the torch of the intelligence" in him; a *tradition,* including both universal truths and historic facts; and finally "a certain rectitude of *judgment,* which develops through the commerce of men and which becomes a faculty to discern the true, a sense for the true." Thus even the subjective criterion of truth in its *developed* form is a social creation.

What society offers us is plainly not a formal test of truth, but a material standard, consisting of "acquired truths." As mankind develops in relation with its environment, it "enters into possession of a treasure of truths," which "is transmitted from age to age," and "goes on purifying itself with the course of the centuries" inasmuch as "the common sense of the new generations, as they appear, tests what the ancients transmit to them." The authority of social tradition is thus very great indeed, in spite of the fact that it is not infallible, and in spite of the fact that we are in duty bound to use our subjective criterion to sift out the human element in tradition from the divine. In any event, it is indispensable; "there is no other means which can take the place of this to transmit to us the first spiritual stimulus and the capacity for speech, as there is none other to maintain and continue the intellectual and moral progress of humanity across the centuries."

It is only when the subjective testimony of the inner sense and the innate ideas chimes in with the testimony of tradition that the conception and birth of a true idea really takes place. When we discover this correspondence between truth within us, and truth without, it "augments . . . that primitive light which we bore

[186] *Phil. Chr.,* I, 306.

[187] J. Royce, *Philosophy of Loyalty,* 24-38.

within us, and gives it a new brilliancy." It is in fact artificial to separate the various means of knowledge from one another. "What we have just distinguished in theory is one in itself, and is not separated in reality." "The moral, intellectual, and animal life is a single life, the life of man." And so each time man discovers a truth, be it physical, moral, or metaphysical, the testimony of nature and the senses, the testimony of society and tradition, and the testimony of the inner consciousness all must collaborate, as the will, the intellect, and the *sensibilité* all collaborate. Neither physical certitude, rational ("moral") certitude, nor metaphysical certitude is possible by itself, apart from the others.[188]

We are now in a position to see why the authority of the Church is legitimate. It is legitimate in the same sense in which the authority of society and the testimony of Nature are legitimate—as a means to otherwise inaccessible truth.

> But why always the Church, or rather the churchman, between the dogma and me, between the Scriptures and me, between the Truth and me? Ask also, if you please, why the mother and her care between the world and the infant, why the master and his word between knowledge and the disciple, why the magistrate between the law and the citizen, why the air and the atmosphere between the sun and you. . . . We are born soul-blind, and it is hardly the part of the man born blind to say, "Get out of my light"![189]

The Church is, in short, at the same time the custodian of that line of tradition to which alone our inner consciousness can assent with utter abandon, and the organ of society by and in which alone we can be educated to respond to the deepest realities.

In the first place, then, the authority of the Church is infallible because the power of the Scriptures over man's heart, when once his heart is opened to their influence, is irresistible. There is no compelling all men to recognize this authority; even the authority of Christ found more to reject than to accept it; but he who is spiritually sensitive will "receive with joy the word of the doctrine, as answering to the desire of his heart, the need of his intelligence, as enlarging and strengthening the circle of his reason."[190] To

[188] For all the quotations above, see *de la Certitude*, 32-48.

[189] *Phil. Chr.*, I, 121-122.

[190] *Ibid.*, 311.

such an one, no further evidence is necessary; to all others, it is useless.

> This is why I see no more necessity to prove it rationally than there would be to demonstrate the existence of the sun, either to a man who enjoys sight, or to one who is deprived of it. He who sees clearly has no need of my reasonings, and they will never give sight to him who does not see it.[191]

Of course, once the individual makes the initial surrender to the divine authority of the Word, the regulative and educative functions of the Church come into play, and he is no more master of himself. Why should he wish to be? Has he not convinced himself that he is dealing with the depositary of divine Truth itself? Once he has reached this position, he is reconciled to the fact that many things remain incomprehensible to him both in the Scriptures and in the discipline of the Church, for he knows that "they contain the true doctrine of progress" in which is contained the compendium of all the truths that men can grasp at all stages of their development.

> The passage of man here below is a path of faith and progress, of work and hope: his first duty is adherence to the Word which is announced to him; his first virtue is submission from the heart to the authority of that Word. The veil will fall at the end, and then we shall see the truth of that in which we have believed.[192]

In that faith, the good Catholic will submit even his inmost feelings to the criticism and correction of the Church, confident that she knows best, and he will come to see her wisdom.

Bautain's criterion of truth is therefore a double one; or rather, the real criterion is the consciousness of the concord of the two criteria. One of Bautain's critics very acutely picks out the following passage[193] as the core of his teaching:

> These two revelations [conscience and Scripture] justify each other, then; they show by their accord that the Being who spoke on Mt. Sinai for the instruction of all men is the same as He who speaks in the conscience of each man.

[191] 2nd Letter to Ferry, FB,K, *Cahier* I, 7.

[192] *Phil. Chr.*, I, 311.

[193] *Ibid.*, 306.

The critic finds this a too subjective criterion:

> The identity of the dictates of conscience, of the law written in the heart of man, with the dictates of the positive law; that is what, according to him, guarantees to us the intrinsic truth of the positive law.[194]

Perhaps we shall have to agree that Bautain has not escaped from the subjectivism which is characteristic of mystics; it is to the *consciousness* of the concord between his objective and subjective criteria, that he appeals in the last resort.

I doubt if Bautain ever completely harmonized his two criteria. In his earlier years, he was so sure of the accord between his philosophy and Christian truth that he walked continually in the light, and assumed an air of authority. His Mennaisian critic maliciously remarks that "he neglected nothing . . . to persuade his auditors that he was a man of genius,"[195] and he charges that Bautain's criterion of truth is not Catholic, but "semi-Protestantism, accompanied by illuminism, in which the Church can be only an *hors-d'oeuvre*."[196] This charge is plainly over-drawn; but the fact remains that when Bautain went to Rome, to submit his writings to the scrutiny of that authority which he confessed to be supreme, he found himself, to his horror, in a state of subconscious rebellion.

> That very morning [he wrote] before arriving at Rome, on the way, I had been assailed by a severe temptation. "What need have you of Rome and the Pope in order to know the Truth," the evil spirit said to me. "Is She not before you like the Sun? Do you need the word of another that the sun gives light and heat? Do you not see it? Do you not feel it? Have you not likewise the Gospel, the word of God? This sun, does it not also shine for all the world, for those at least who have eyes to see"—I heard all that, and I was in distress; not that I had ever had a thought of opposition, but the seduction to which I have always been most exposed has been to care little, inwardly, for outward forms, while yet remaining attached to the Church in all her practices, and never detaching myself from the centre of catholicity. There is a great difference [he admits] between accepting the authority of Rome only negatively, so to speak, and as a condition without which one cannot live, and accepting it positively, with a living acceptance, with love, as if coming to a mother to whom one owes respect and obedience.[197]

[194] *Rapport à l'évêque*, 22.
[195] *Ens. Phil. B.*, 631.
[196] *Ibid.*, 625.
[197] *De Régny*, 251-252.

This temptation once conquered, Bautain was never the same again. It is true that, a few days later, when he heard that his *Philosophie du Christianisme* was likely to be put on the Index, the wound reopened.

> That made me heart-sick [he wrote] and it would take a great act of faith to adhere to such an affirmation, if it could come from the Holy See. . . . It is the greatest sacrifice that I could make, since it would be the abandonment of my whole life, of my past and of my future. . . .
> I feel within me [he nevertheless could add] the courage to make the sacrifice, and I pray God to give me strength for it by redoubling my faith, humility, and charity.[198]

From that time on, Bautain was really living by his objective criterion of truth more than by his subjective; and the proof of it is that he came to speak of faith in a new sense. In the *conférences* which he gave before the *Cercle Catholique* in 1842-43, we have faith described no longer as a cognitive faculty, which dimly perceives the truth of that which it accepts, but as a sort of desperate leap in the dark, illumined by not a flash of intuition, and motivated solely by *external* evidence and the "will to believe."

> To believe is not to *see*. . . . It is not to *doubt*. . . . It is not to *suspect*, or to have a mere opinion. . . . To *believe*, is to give one's assent to a word; that is, to adhere to it as fully, admit its truth as firmly, as if there were knowledge, although there be neither evidence nor demonstration. Belief thus participates in the characteristics of knowledge with respect to firmness of assent, and in those of opinion with respect to lack of evidence. In belief, the will carries the mind with it. In knowledge, the mind, seeing and convinced, tries to carry the will with it. . . . There are always motives for believing; but the motives which lead one to adhere to the word do not render the proposed truth evident; they simply give the firm conviction that it is the Word of God. Hence faith is at once luminous and obscure, since by it man sees clearly what he must believe, without having the evidence and the knowledge of what he believes. . . . It renders one humble and submissive, since it makes one admit by an act of will what the mind does not understand. It is the specific remedy for the original vice of the mind: pride.[199]

The non-Catholic will be inclined to marvel at the inconsistency

[198] *De Régny*, 262-263. [199] *Op. cit.*, 55-56.

of a Church which condemns a man for basing his philosophy upon the act of submission which that same act of condemnation requires of him. The Catholic will see no inconsistency; *fides implicita* is naturally required of a man after he has given himself into the hands of an infallible authority; but the Church has never required it of the man who is examining the *praeambula fidei*, and trying to decide whether or no the Church's authority is infallible. To demand faith of the honest unbeliever, before giving him sound reasons for believing—will such a mode of procedure not leave the impression that religion is essentially irrational? Such is the reasoning which led to the condemnation of Bautain's philosophy; and one must admit that it is perfectly consistent. The Catholic Church must jealously guard the rationality of the arguments by which she proves the existence of God and her own divine commission, or she will appear to be resting her case on nothing more solid than vociferous assertions and anathemas. It may be questioned, however, whether Bautain's fideism really undermines the Catholic system in any such fashion. He was not attacking the attempt to convince the unbeliever; he was simply attacking a rationalistic apologetic which, according to his observation, never *did* convince the unbeliever, and in its place he wished to set a non-argumentative apologetic which, if his experience with young men was to be trusted, was actually able to convince. We must turn, then, to Bautain's apologetics before passing final judgment upon his epistemology; for his whole theory of knowledge, truth, and certitude, is meant to be an elaborate justification of his new method of defending the faith, and his whole philosophy is a protracted apology.

## III

## The Apologetics of the Heart and the Apologetics of the Intelligence

The great document for Bautain's apologetics is of course the *Philosophie du Christianisme*. There one sees the process of persuasion in actual operation, and one gets an incomparable exemplification of what Voluntarism means in the sphere of religion; for, in strict accordance with his theory of knowledge, Bautain aims

primarily at the heart and the will, secondarily, at the "intelligence," and only lastly, if at all, at the reason.

He had, to be sure, three very good subjects for his "apologetics of the heart." They were all of them young Romanticists, plagued with *mal de siècle* and the *besoin de croire*, filled with a "craving for the infinite," and dreaming, as one of them expressed it, of "a vague object which might correspond to the need of my soul."[200] They recognized that their greatest need was for moral power—something to cure them of their fatal *abulia*—and they believed that it might be found in religion.

> Give me what I lack [cries Julien] that *je ne sais quoi*, the privation of which and the necessity of which I feel so keenly. There must be something stronger than anything I am acquainted with, which will give me the means of doing what is right.[201]

Bautain attracted them, they testify, because they felt "something *plein d'âme*," "something vital"[202] in his teaching; and because he bade them judge truth *practically*.

> You enjoined us [writes Adéodat] to judge the doctrine . . . in accordance with the effects it would produce in us, relative to morality and happiness.[203]

The sovereign remedy for the soul's disease was prayer, he told them. Let them not wait until they were intellectually convinced of the reasonableness of prayer; let them pray, and judge of the validity of prayer by its moral effects. He refused to argue about the truth of the Scriptures or the dogmas of religion. Read and meditate, he urged them; apply these teachings to your soul's need, and see if you are not healed.

> It will not be your reason, then [writes the Master], or all reasons put together . . . that will be able to give you the certitude of the

[200] *Phil. Chr.*, I, *Notice Adéodat.* See xxxiv-xxxvi, where the following significant passage also occurs: "*Combien je souffrais d'un indéfinissable malaise! J'avais besoin d'aimer, et j'étais facile à m'enflammer pour toute âme aimante . . . demandant à être aimé et compris, quoique je ne me comprisse pas moi-même. Je me disais souvent: J'ai vingt ans, et j'ignore pourquoi je suis au monde! Qu'est-ce donc que ce fait singulier qu'on appelle la vie?*"

[201] *Phil. Chr.*, I, 60.

[202] *Ibid.*, lxv.

[203] *Ibid.*, 5.

intrinsic truth of the divine Word. Only Itself can testify to its truth; and to this end you must . . . receive it, and you must taste it, just as one can judge of a fruit only by eating it.

Suppose [he continues] that your eye is diseased—covered with a cataract or paralyzed—and that a friend who takes the most tender interest in you, having been afflicted with the same disease, was cured of it by a particular remedy. This friend comes and talks to you of his care and of the remedy. He makes you a reasoned dissertation upon the nature and qualities of the medicament. His dissertation may give you the desire to take it, but of a surety it will not cure you. He presents you with the substance and tells you the directions and the necessary conditions. You adhere to the conditions, accept the remedy, take it and you are cured![204]

If you wish, therefore, to test the truth of religion, act as if it were true, and see if you are not strengthened and helped!

Under this course of instruction, the feeling of the truth of religion began gradually to dawn upon the minds of the three young Romanticists. At first it was very vague.

Yes [writes Adéodat], the truths developed in your letters give me a sort of inward and spontaneous certitude; they seem to be gently inviting me to admit them, and to rest in them from all the fatigue of my mind. What is this certitude of which I am not certain, this certitude which is sweet to my heart, rather than reassuring for my reason?[205]

Bautain replies that Adéodat's certitude is vague "because your inner eye is feeble, because you adhere to particular truths only with reservations, because, free to admit the Word or to refuse it, your reason hesitates."[206] Believe more strongly, he urges, and you will see more clearly.

Later the promised "vision of the truth" began to come to all the disciples; they began to "see" what at first they had only "tasted."

Truly [writes Eudore], there are instants when I feel myself as it were pierced with beams of light, and then I suddenly perceive the meaning of a word in the Gospel or one of your propositions, which I had hitherto admitted by *goût intime* rather than with understanding. . . . At each one of these illuminations, my horizon broadens. Another

[204] *Ibid.*, 309-310.
[205] *Ibid.*, 287-288.
[206] *Ibid.*, 299.

world unfolds itself to my gaze, and in the depths of my being there is something like an increase of life and of ardor which is given to me.[207]

The "apologetics of the heart" form the groundwork, then, of Bautain's novel art of persuasion. Without argument, but with a reassuring air of conviction, he would prescribe certain passages of Scripture and certain "propositions" for his neophytes to believe, as a physician prescribes pellets for his patients to swallow, ordering them to "taste and see" if they were not benefited. In this, he was simply adopting the mode of procedure which Mlle. Humann had followed in his own case. He recognized that the crucial moment for him had come when he first set himself, at her suggestion, to reading the Gospels, in a receptive mood; and he summed up his whole experience in the words, *"J'ai lu, j'ai cru, j'ai vu."*[208] It would be unjust, however, to say that Bautain relied solely on dogmatic assertions, whose truth was to be tested only by their practical "workings" and their power to satisfy the heart's desires. The "workings" of ideas are theoretical as well as practical; and a "true" idea must have not only the power to satisfy the heart's desire, but also the power to bind other ideas into intelligible and rational systems. The apologetics of the heart must be supplemented by the apologetics of the intelligence, if conviction is to be complete.

> The Word divine, the principle of knowledge [he says] . . . is given to us as an intelligible germ, as a mother-idea. By faith or by voluntary adherence it is planted in our soul and pushes its roots down into that soil; but as it goes down into the depths of the heart, it strives at the same time to lift itself, to unfold itself in the mind; it strives to form itself, ex-pose itself, and, so to speak, blossom out there in a multitude of consequences which manifest all the truths it bore within it; and this harmonious development, which constituted knowledge, gives us . . . the proof and the consciousness of what we had already felt or tasted in the depths of our being through the heart.[209]

What is the nature of these theoretical "consequences" which give us the "proof" of the doctrine which we have already tested by its practical fruits? To answer that question, one would have

[207] *Phil. Chr.*, II, 294.
[208] *Ens. Phil. B.*, 625.
[209] *Ens. Phil. F.*, 89-90.

to give an exposition of Bautain's whole system of philosophy; for his whole philosophy is an extended effort to unfold the "multitude of consequences" which ensue when the truth of religion is once presupposed. We may sum up in a few words, however, the chief and decisive "consequence," which (Bautain thinks) constitutes a triumphant and indisputable proof of the truth of religion: once adopt the first principles of religion as the first principles of your philosophy, and presto! the fragments of human knowledge, hitherto so disjointed that the various sciences do not even constitute a mechanism, begin to knit themselves marvellously together, until presently there rises before your astonished gaze a veritable *body* of human knowledge, all-inclusive, in which each truth is *organically* related to all others.

Modern science and modern philosophy, says Bautain, are in a deplorable state of chaos. The *natural sciences* refuse to deal with anything but the visible, the corporeal, the ponderable; hence, Bautain claims, they are "inadequate to their object."

> Whatever naturally comes into being is not only visible but invisible too; it not only shows a corporeal surface, but also has a hidden substance; it is not merely an effect, but bears within it something also of its cause, whereby it is able to appear and endure.[210]

When the imponderables are thus ignored, there arises the paradox of a biology which can tell us nothing about life, and a psychology which knows no soul. *Mathematics*, on the other hand, is adequate to its object; but this is just because the mathematical object is a mental creation, which "neither exists nor lives, but is abstractly thought out and defined in mere words."[211] Since neither natural science nor mathematics is able to reach ultimate reality, *philosophy* endeavors to fill in the breach. It takes for its territory the realm of the "spiritual, moral, metaphysical"[212] realities neglected by science and mathematics, yet somehow it manages to

[210] Gratry, *de Methodis Scientiarum*, 18. Of this essay of Gratry's, the Mennaisian says: "The parts of this dissertation which correspond to the paragraphs which M. Bautain has expounded to us represent almost word for word the language of the celebrated professor. The disciple has hardly troubled to do more than to translate it into Latin." *Ens. Phil. B.*, 641.

[211] Gratry, *de Methodis Scientiarum*, 18-19.

[212] *Ibid.*, 19.

err even more extravagantly than either of its rivals. One reason for this is that philosophers, in trying to grasp the "spirit" of things, neglect the form, too lightly scorning the aid of science and mathematics.[213]

They plunge at once into the secret places and recesses of things, and pass by what is out in the open; they think they are scrutinizing the forces and first principles of Nature, and meanwhile they disdain Nature's face and countenance. . . . Mathematical stability and strength—as it were, the aid of a heavy armor—they reject; they are ignorant of the changeless laws of natural forms.[214]

There is, however, a more fundamental reason for their failure. They forget that if God is τὸ ὄν, one must have experienced God before one can talk about ultimate reality; and thus if they talk about Him at all, they reduce Him to a rational entity, Aristotle's τό τι ἦν εἶναι.

And so, not having been fecundated by experience of the universal Being, not having been enlightened by any intuition of simple Nature, left to themselves alone between God and Nature, midway, as it were, between heaven and earth, they lack both beginning and ending, soul and body, . . . and meanwhile their naked mind goes about disporting itself and raving madly.[215]

Such being the cause of the chaos into which modern science and philosophy have fallen, the task of Christian philosophy is plain: on the one hand, it must found a new philosophy of Nature, in which philosophic insight into the "spirit" of things shall be combined with scientific respect for empirical facts and mathematical respect for form and number; and on the other hand, it must bring about a new marriage of philosophy and theology—or better, a transfiguration of philosophy by religious experience. Thus will be founded a truly universal *science*, in which theology and natural science, instead of contending with one another, will confirm one another.

We affirm [says Gratry, speaking for the "school of Strasbourg"] that

[213] This criticism is evidently levelled against the *Naturphilosophie* of Schelling and other German Romanticists.

[214] Gratry, *de Methodis Scientiarum*, 20.

[215] *Ibid.*, 21.

true *science* will arise if man approaches God and Nature at once, and takes his stand midway between things divine and things natural, below God and above Nature, thus conceiving a science of the universe at once theological, philosophical, and mathematical: in its first principle theological, in its evolution and spirit philosophical, in the exposition and *body* of the doctrine, as it were, Mathematical—*doctrinam e tribus unam*.[216]

There evidently hovered before Bautain's imagination, in his earlier period, the dream of a vast new philosophical synthesis, in which, as in the mediaeval synthesis, theology should once more be harmonized with secular learning—with modern science and the experimental method, this time, instead of with the learning of the ancients, accepted on authority. For the details of this magnificent programme of reconstruction—which, alas, remained only a programme—we must go to a remarkable manuscript course of Bautain's, probably the one with which he opened his private class at Mlle. Humann's.[217]

As we have seen, there are two main planks in Bautain's platform of reconstruction: the founding of a new *Naturphilosophie* through the alliance of science, mathematics, and philosophy; and the founding of a new metaphysics through the alliance of philosophy and theology.

The first of these two planks is a bit vague. Sometimes it seems as though Bautain were simply recommending that the natural sciences should make use more frankly of philosophical concepts like "life" and "the soul," and that philosophy, in turn, should be sobered and checked in its wild flights of speculation by a more careful attention to the empirical data of the quantitative sciences. That this is part of his meaning must be evident from passages like the following:

> The great means and the only means of harmonizing philosophical doctrines, or rather, rescuing philosophy herself from the sway of arbitrariness and of *scientific prejudices* is to restore the natural spirit to the natural form, philosophy to mathematics. . . . It is to admit as *philosophical Ideas* only such as find their ideal really and objectively existing in Nature, and as laws of Nature, only such as demonstrate themselves

[216] *Ibid.*, 25.

[217] *Philosophie, Théologique et Mathématique*, (1823-24), FB,V10.

by the laws and the pure forms of mathematics; it is to insist no longer on considering circle and circumference, spirit, and body, time and space, number and figure separately, and as if each subsisted by itself apart, but to see them together, as identical, always united, and maintained in their union by the *life*.[218]

Philosophy would then acquire what it cannot have of itself: objective certitude, natural form; . . . and its form would be the living and objective demonstration of itself, and of the truth of its spirit. Then, and only then, would there be no more philosophical schisms, no more French, German, Scotch philosophy, etc., but a single philosophy, as unified and general as Nature, the object of philosophy, is general and unified. . . . Then would the empty and inert forms of science, reanimated by the spirit, and the latter fixed and determined by the form—then would philosophy, reunited with mathematics, no longer be a system of fluctuating and uncertain opinions, . . . and mathematics, reunited with philosophy, resuscitated by it, would no longer be a doctrine sterile for the intelligence, a rational anatomy, operating only on dead bodies, a system of dead letters, killing the spirit, smothering genius, withering and petrifying the soul.[219]

Here the term "mathematics" seems to be almost equivalent to "quantitative science." Elsewhere, however, it is used in a definitely Pythagorean sense. Bautain regrets that we do not "still see, with Pythagoras, the expression of the laws of the universe in the law of numbers, and, with Plato, the order of generations or of genesis in the principles of geometry."[220]

It is impossible to tell which of these two meanings was really uppermost in Bautain's mind; for he seems to have confused them inextricably, and he never worked out their full implications himself. His pupils, however, did take the matter up. In the strange manuscript remains which the Abbé Carl left behind him at Juilly there may be seen the *reductio ad absurdum* of the Pythagorean strain in Bautain's thinking—page after page of mystic numbers and figures, mingled with Cabalistic lore, derived perhaps from the Jewish members of the band. In the works of Father Gratry, on the other hand, we see a persistent and often fruitful attempt to make a "heavy armor" for philosophy by the patient cultivation of natural science and the higher mathematics. It is perhaps in Gratry's astronomical and physiological speculations, and his bril-

[218] *Op. cit.*, §§ 24-25.
[219] *Ibid.*, §§ 11-12.
[220] *Ibid.*, § 10.

liant if specious application of the infinitesimal calculus to the elucidation of religious concepts, that this first step in Bautain's program is best realized.[221]

But the union of philosophy with mathematics is only half of the grand restoration of human knowledge which Bautain proposes; the other half is the union of philosophy with theology. The philosophy of nature in its completed form is at best *connaissance*, and not *science;* it presents nature to us as a unified mechanism, not yet as a living organism.

> To mechanize the dead letter by reuniting philosophical spirit with mathematical forms, to determine and stabilize that spirit by giving it back its basis or its body, is much; it is *everything* for the science of the world, and all that pertains to the temporal order; but it is not all that man demands for his happiness. . . . He must have a science which shall be not only *mechanism*, identification of spirit with form, but . . . *organism*, living development—a vital, fecund, and fecundating science. . . . Like the universe, like man, and like nature, of which it is to be the science and the doctrine, it must have warmth and life at its center, it must be luminous in its development, and constant, clear, harmonious in its forms; and, as the center . . . always *is* before the radius, before the circle and the circumference, as Being and center are the absolute conditions of form and existence, so too the *doctrine* of pure and universal Being, with the doctrine of genesis, or the laws of generation, must constitute the basis, the foundation, the point of departure of philosophic teaching. In fine, this teaching, in order to be true, legitimate, and vital, and to answer to the triple need of man, must be as profoundly religious or theological as it is rigorously mathematical.[222]

The necessity of a union of theology and philosophy springs from the fact that the idea of Being, the capstone of every philosophical system, without which it falls to pieces, or becomes a mere *mechanism*, is accessible only through religious experience. Like all the other ideas, it is innate; but it must be awakened from its state of potentiality by contact with its divine original. Some men have never opened their souls to that celestial touch; they are totally

[221] Passages like the following would indicate that Bautain intended to do what Gratry did: "Since the method of observation and experiment has been introduced into philosophy . . . philosophy finds herself . . . in commerce with all the other sciences; now, they all have been rejuvenated in their methodology; hence, she must proceed and speak like them if she wishes to have life and be appreciated. She must observe, experiment, examine." FB,H17, *verso*.

[222] *Philosophie, Théologique et Mathématique*, §§ 18-19.

incapacitated for philosophy. Others—and this applies to most of us—have "forgotten" the idea, and need to "recollect" it. This is the true meaning of Platonic reminiscence.

> What causes forgetfulness of the idea? The perversion of the eye of the soul, the swerving of its visual ray or glance from the ideal, the breaking of the relation between subject and object, whence results the absence of the latter as far as the former is concerned. What causes reminiscence? The traces or substantial vestiges which the ideal had posited in the mind, and which, although overlaid, . . . nevertheless subsist in being, in essence, and in potentiality, and can be reawakened in the understanding where they have been posited. How return to the idea? By purging the mind of gross and terrestrial images, by lifting the glance toward the superior region, by putting oneself again in the presence of and *en rapport* with real or intelligible objects, by returning from forms to Beauty, from spirit to the Truth, from existence to Being, to Love, to Goodness, to God.[223]

It is evident that the "theology" which Bautain proposes to unite with, and make the basis of philosophy is not what one usually understands by the term. It is not a body of doctrine, but an inward experience: "experimental theology," as Bautain calls it; "sentimental theology," as the Mennaisian nicknames it; "mystic theology," as the Church commonly calls it. What Bautain proposes to do is not to lay down dogmatically the whole body of Christian theology in its integrity, and then prove its truth by showing the correspondence between theology and secular philosophy, as St. Thomas had done. No, his attitude toward theology as it stands is quite revolutionary: he proposes

> to free the fundamental dogmas of Christianity—for Christianity contains all truth—to free its dogmas of all scholastic subtlety, of every historical addition, of everything that the speculative reason, depending always necessarily on the senses, on times, places, and circumstances, has added to it, and to offer these profound dogmas to simple faith, which is the condition *sine qua non* of all knowledge.[224]

In other words, he proposes to do what modern Protestant theology has been attempting to do, ever since Schleiermacher: to get behind rational theology to the religious experience from which

[223] *Philosophie, Théologique et Mathématique*, § 6, note.

[224] *Ibid.*, § 26.

it sprang, and from which it borrows such validity as it possesses. What he asks of the philosopher, as a necessary condition of all philosophizing, is not to accept all the dogmas of theology, but to *experience God*. In this attempt to subject theology to the test of experience, he is undoubtedly unorthodox, from the Catholic point of view; but it should be noted that all the great mystics, many of whom are revered as saints in the Catholic Church, exhibit a similar tendency to reduce theology to lowest terms, and to appeal from doctrine to experience.

But if philosophy is to be merged on the one hand with mathematics and natural science, and on the other hand with experimental theology, what place is left for philosophy itself? Well, the rôle of philosophy in Bautain's synthesis of human knowledge is a mediatorial, harmonizing rôle. Philosophy is to concern itself with bridging the gap between the visible and the invisible, between the finite and the infinite; it is to show how Being issues from itself and becomes existence, how the Eternal becomes subject to the forms of time and space. It is the "historical or genetic part" of universal knowledge.[225] Standing between God and Nature, and taking for its peculiar province the science of Man, it is to show how Man and Nature issued from God; it is furthermore to point out the myriad analogies which testify to the organic unity of all reality, and which link theology, psychology, and natural science together into a system in which each corroborates and is corroborated by the others. There would be three grand sections in this great *corpus scientiarum:*

> Inward feeling, taste for Being, or experimental theology; science of the existences and of their generation, or analytical philosophy; and science of the pure forms, or transcendental mathematics. These [says Bautain] might be called its soul, its mind, and its body; together they would form a truly *organic* system, in which the mathematical forms would be to the philosophy of nature what the body is to the mind, the form to the life, space to time, the determinant to the indeterminate; and in which the philosophy of nature would be to sacred ontology what the mind is to the soul or to the will, or the life to its *foyer*, what the circle is to the center, the indefinite to the infinite, the terminus to eternity.[226]

[225] *Ibid.*

[226] FB,V10, § 22.

From the organic interrelation of all knowledge there follows a most important consequence: the legitimacy of the analogical method.

If creature and nature form a harmonic whole, a single organism, which we call the world or the universe, science also [argues Bautain] . . . is not and cannot be other than unified; and if each part of the organism is for the whole, comprehended in the whole, in living relation with the whole, and with each constitutive part thereof, the science of each part also must be . . . in organic and analogical relation with the whole, and with each particular science.[227]

Or, as the Mennaisian puts it:

The fundamental axiom of his metaphysics is that all beings, all existences, obey a common law. Each existence presupposes a being whence it issued, and each being presupposes an original Being. . . . Since the same law rules all that exists, it is clear that whatever is demonstrated of one existence will be demonstrated of all existence.[228]

If, therefore, the law of the whole is the law of each part, then the laws of the divine or ultimately real world will find themselves more or less clearly exemplified throughout the whole creation. Theological truths will find themselves corroborated by analogies from the natural sciences, and these analogies will in turn cast light upon theology.

Visible things declare the invisible, and the facts of nature declare the law of man. There is in physical nature nothing indifferent, nothing arbitrary or fortuitous; everywhere, on the contrary, a deep meaning, a hidden reason. This inferior nature is but the veil of a higher Nature, whose brilliance pierces still through the thickness of the veil. And so the history of natural things, well written, is but a Symbolism.[229]

The dangers of this method are evident; and it cannot be said that Bautain escapes them. On the one hand, he verges on the grotesque in his detailed exegesis of the divine symbolism of Nature. The Trinity is reflected everywhere; every object, for example, must have at least three legs on which to stand! The Cross is

[227] FB,V10, § 6.
[228] *Ens. Phil. B.*, 596.
[229] *Variétés*, 5.

the foundation of every existence; for every vital center, as it begins to polarize, traces first an upright line, and then a transverse line! *"Par exemple!"* exclaims the Mennaisian, after reciting a few of these enormities, "Will he show us the existence and necessity of the seven sacraments in the seven stars of the Great Bear!"[230] And on the other hand, Bautain's science is apt to intrude into his theology as mischievously as his theology into his science—mischievously, at any rate, from the point of view of orthodoxy. One of his critics cleverly paraphrases his teaching as follows:

> The visible world is a tracing, a photographic proof of the invisible world. . . . If, therefore, we wish to know the world of spirits, let us go search Nature and its laws; let us proceed from the known to the unknown. This axiom being well fixed in the earth like a solid landmark, the work of the philosopher is simplified: . . . placed between Nature and Revelation, he has only to apply the laws of the one to the dogmas of the other, and conciliate the natural order with the supernatural order by means of science.[231]

The critic mistakes the real order of Bautain's argument: he proceeds, not from the visible to the invisible, but from the invisible to the visible; if the visible world is a "photographic proof" of the invisible, it is a very bad likeness, for the world as it exists is a degenerate world. What is true of God must be true, in some sense, of phenomena, while what is true of phenomena may not be true at all of God; for the validity of science is purely relative, while the validity of theology is absolute. Nevertheless, it is undoubtedly true that the scientific analogies by which Bautain seeks to show the universality of theological verities, tend to exert a rationalizing influence upon his theology.

Whatever its dangers, the analogical method is fundamental to Bautain's apologetics. Analogies are not proofs, he fully admits; but he is not trying to prove anything. He is merely trying, as he puts it, "to conciliate the dignity of the intelligence which demands ideas and knowledge with the cry of the heart which calls for faith," and so make it possible for men of science to "justify

[230] *Ens. Phil. B.*, 627.

[231] Quoted in Campaux, *Le philosophe de Strasbourg*, 36-40.

their faith in the eyes of their mind, and confirm their beliefs by their knowledge."[232] He is trying to smooth the path of those who would like to believe, but are impeded by intellectual difficulties. Knowing that theology is full of stumbling-blocks for the secular mind, he seeks to recommend its dogmas indirectly, by analogies and illustrations drawn from more familiar fields.

> You cannot set up the dogmatic formula authoritatively [he admits]; it would not be received. Well, if the direct way is not open, if you cannot go straight up to the principle to deduce the science rigorously from it, if your auditors cannot seize the truth in its abstruse forms, in its pure and dogmatic expression, present it in its less elevated applications, in forms nearer to them. Well, what is there nearer to man than himself? . . . What speaks more vividly to his mind than the facts of nature. It is therefore in these two ways and under these two forms that the types of the prototypes, the plainest developments of the idea, must be sought.[233]

Arguments based upon psychology and upon the study of the realm of animate Nature thus form the core of Bautain's "apologetics of the intelligence." In both of these realms, his procedure is to set forth a transcendental idea, and then justify it by showing its application to empirical facts. In psychology, he first sets forth the theological idea of man, "indicating the principle, the purpose, and the reason of his existence in this world, with his law which is that of a free but not independent being."[234] Then, like Pascal, he writes a moral psychology designed to make plausible the theory that man has fallen from a high estate, and is destined to return to it, stressing man's hunger for the Infinite, his dependent and subject state, and his limited spontaneity, which opens the way for true freedom and true peace, found only in submission to a higher Will. In dealing with animate nature, Bautain starts with the theological idea that Nature is the product of a degradation of spirit even profounder than that involved in the fall of man. Hence Nature can only be understood in terms of spirit as we find it in man—"spirit bursting out at all points through imprisoning matter"—just as man can only be understood in terms of Spirit as we find it in God. In Nature, he says,

[232] *Ens. Phil. F.*, lxvi.
[233] *Réflexions*, 39-40.
[234] *Ibid.*, 41.

the intelligence . . . perceives as it were a second *resplendissement* of the glory of the Eternal, refracted in a prism less pure, and manifesting itself in more nuanced and duller hues. The science of nature will therefore be to that of man what the science of man will be to that of God.[235]

Thus, he concludes, the inquirer will be led

by the science of man and nature to the *idea* of the dogma which rules nature and man, and which expresses metaphysically, ideally, what is realized in the life of each. . . . Such was the practise of Origen and the doctors of Alexandria in their learned *catéchèses*, where human knowledge served as a step to lift oneself to the intelligence of divine truths, where Christian philosophy, starting from faith and the idea, led to *gnosis*[236] and *praxis*.[237]

But suppose that the inquirer does not respond to this treatment. Suppose he remains cold to the appeal of the Gospel, and, unsatisfied by your loose analogies and "developments of the idea," demands an iron-clad logical proof. Ought you not to attempt to comply with his demand? No! answers Bautain.

Theology forgets her dignity and her celestial origin, she degrades herself, every time she enters the lists and combats with the reason. "Can you believe?"—that is her first condition, and not "Can you understand, discuss, and argue." . . . "We announce to you," says the Apostle —not "We prove to you," but—"We announce to you the Word of Life."[238]

You may indeed reason with the unbeliever at the start, to convince him that his *a priori* rational objections are inconclusive; but when all such obstacles are destroyed, you must cease to argue, and leave the Word of God to convince him by its own power.

After that, what? Supposing the inquirer is still recalcitrant?

In truth [answers Bautain] I shall do nothing with him if the light of the word does not penetrate within him. His is precisely the case of the blind man who remains in darkness at high noon. . . . It is a great illusion to believe that there is an *infallible means* of convincing

[235] *Ens. Phil. F.*, 94.

[236] Science is frequently used by Bautain in a sense exactly equivalent to γνῶσις.

[237] *Réflexions*, 41-45.

[238] FB,V10, § 23.

men, that it is enough to apply this means in order to change them over, enough to present this supposed *Criterion* in order to compel their assent. Things do not work that way in reality. Man often resists the most evident truth in the most deplorable manner. "The light shone in the darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not."[239]

There are, generally speaking, two main stages in the traditional Christian apologetics. In the first stage, one attempts to prove the validity of certain beliefs common to all or most religions; one argues for the existence of God, the possibility of a future life, etc. In the second stage, one attempts to prove that Christianity is *the* religion, and that the Christian "revelation," as presented in the Scriptures, or in Scripture and tradition as interpreted by the Church, bears the earmarks of divine origin and hence must be infallible. It will help us to appreciate the originality of Bautain's apologetics if, in closing our account of it, we deal specifically with his argument for the existence of God, and his argument for the truth of the Christian revelation.

In the eighteenth century, the favorite arguments for the existence of God had been arguments from external Nature, the cosmological and teleological arguments. For reasons that we have already hinted at, Bautain rejects both of them. It is impossible to conclude from the finite to the infinite; hence the cosmological argument is inconclusive. If one may trace in Nature certain tendencies which look like the working of a benevolent Creator, one may also trace quite contrary tendencies; hence the teleological argument is inconclusive. The former leads logically to pantheism or deism; the latter, to Manichaean dualism. Neither of them proves the existence of the kind of God the religious consciousness demands. Neither of them is really convincing except to those who believe in God already, "those who have a living faith in their heart." It is to such alone that "the heavens declare the glory of God"; as for those who are "destitute of faith and charity," Bautain is inclined to think that it is folly to "give them, as proofs, nothing but the course of the moon and the planets." "Far from carrying them with you by this means, in no wise, on the contrary, are you more likely to repel them . . . than by attempting to convince them by this sort of reasoning."[240]

[239] 2nd Letter to Ferry, FB,K, *Cahier* I, 7.

[240] *Avertissement*, Q. 1.

The fallacy of both these arguments, as he repeatedly points out, is to try to arrive at the Christian God in two leaps, first proving the existence of a great First Cause or a great Something-or-other, an X-God without personal characteristics or attributes, useful only to explain certain natural phenomena, and then surreptitiously clothing this rational entity with qualities without which it is unfit to worship, but which cannot be logically deduced from the original argument. The question of God's existence should not thus be separated from the question of his attributes: "Truly we do not see how the existence of the Infinite can be conceived *in abstracto*. . . . Existence considered . . . apart from life, is only a logical entity, to which no truth, no reality, corresponds. It is an idol the reason makes for itself.[241]

The condemnation that Bautain pronounces upon the cosmological and teleological arguments does not fall with equal force upon the other traditional arguments, the ontological, psychological, and moral arguments.

The ontological argument, as stated by Bautain, is as follows:

> Every man who has heard the name of God, who has understood the meaning of this sacred name, and who has not rejected it, believes in God; he believes in Him even if he imagines he does not believe in Him; he believes in Him in spite of his negation. *God is Being*; . . . he is *He who Is*; and the idea of Being is the fundamental idea, the *mother-idea* of the human understanding, without which it would be incapable of conceiving any existence. So it is only the fool who can say: God (Being) is not. What good will your reasoning do . . . if it is addressed to a fool who lacks the Absolute Major Premise of all reasoning, or who denies it with his will, in his heart?[242]

By itself, however, the ontological argument is insufficient. It is, in fact, platitudinous. *That* Being is, *that* there is an "Absolute Major Premise," no one can deny; *what* Being is, is a totally different question. Man knows that some Absolute Being exists, but "he does not know where Being manifests itself in its truth, where one must look for it, where one may find it in its purity, whether it exists everywhere or nowhere for man."[243] His indecision is resolved by no amount of observation of external nature;

[241] *Ibid.*
[242] *Letter on Common Sense,* 646-647.
[243] FB,V3, § 6.

it vanishes only when he begins to observe his own inner nature—when he combines the ontological argument with the psychological and moral arguments, in a very special form.

> Every man [says Bautain] bears in his deepest nature the idea of Being, but not every man has the philosophical consciousness of that idea; not every man knows or understands that God is the Absolute Being and that there is a necessary, permanent, and indestructible relation between God and the human soul—that it is only there, in the inner nature or in his interior sanctum, that there is found the truly irrefutable proof, theoretical and moral, of the Absolute, independent Being. Hence he goes out to seek this proof in the external world, or in his secondary faculties, and, seeking it where it is not, and not finding it, he remains, not in doubt about the truth of Being, since he himself says, "I am," but in vagueness concerning the *where* and the *how* of the manifestation of Being. He knows not where to seek for God, or what to do with the idea of God which has its seat in his soul, and which he cannot dislodge *(abstraire)*.[244]

The existence of the idea of Being in man—this is, according to Bautain, the only conclusive proof of the existence of God. Sometimes his argument seems to be simply that the presence of the word *God* and the verb *to be* in human language, or their presence as thoughts in men's minds, is totally incomprehensible unless man has really at some time come in contact with a Reality to which they correspond. Sometimes the argument is that in saying *I am*, the Ego simultaneously affirms the existence of an Absolute *Alter;* for *I am* implies *I have not always been*, which in turn, says Bautain, implies that "I am not therefore of myself, by myself! An Other than myself made me to be and makes me to exist."[245]

These arguments, however, are accessory to Bautain's main argument. To understand this main argument, we must remind ourselves that an idea, to Bautain, is not a rational concept but an innate capacity, an organic craving or need; that all such ideas are correlative to eternal ideals, which alone satisfy their craving; and that the truth of any given rational *notion* is tested by its capacity to meet the need which the idea embodies. Now the idea of Being or "the subjective capacity to receive the virtue of Being,"[246] is the Idea of Ideas, the Form of Forms.

[244] FB,V3, § 7. [245] *Ibid.*, § 15. [246] *Ibid.*, § 3.

It is identical [says Bautain] with the soul, the type or image of the Principle of all things. In its root it is the soul itself, the form divine. In its development, it is the soul reflecting itself in its understanding or . . . it is the inward affirmation of the Ego under the pressure *(action)* of the Non-Ego; that is to say, the conscience.[247]

*Conscience*, then, or *man's need of God*, is the great proof of the existence of God.

This need [says Bautain] testifies to the existence of a fundamental relation between the Truth and him, and there is in his *conscience* a truly primitive fact which proves it. It is in this fact . . . that the point of contact and union between the terrestrial and celestial worlds is found. That is what constitutes the irrefutable proof of the *existence of God*—so laboriously searched for in inferior nature and in the laws of the reason—the profoundest proof of the relation between God and man.[248]

"God must exist, because I need Him so": in these words Bautain's argument for the existence of God might be summed up. Otherwise stated, the argument is that the idea of God is *true* because it is *good*, because it helps and satisfies. Truly, there was never a bolder pragmatism than this! Yet we have here no mere blind determination to "believe what I wish to believe, because I wish to believe it." Neither have we that form of pragmatism which would say that the utility of the idea of God *constitutes* its truth. No, for Bautain, the appeal to the heart presupposes a rational argument: the Universe formed me; whatever, therefore, belongs to my deepest nature was imprinted there by something in the Universe; I find in myself a craving for ultimates and absolutes; there is therefore Something in the Universe which gave me this craving, and which, I hope, will satisfy it. The argument might perhaps be compared with a form of theistic argument popularized recently by John Fiske, who deduced it from Darwinism. I find it succinctly stated in a recent book of Rufus Jones, the Quaker philosopher:

A subjective need always carries an implication of an objective stimulus which has provoked the need. There is no hunger, as Fiske has well shown, for anything not tasted; there is no search for anything which

[247] *Ibid.*, § 5. [248] *Psych. Exp.*, I, 70.

is not in the environment, for the environment has always produced the appetite. So this native need of the soul [for ideal companionship] arose out of the divine origin of the soul, and it has steadily verified itself as a safe guide to reality. . . .

What is at first a vague life-activity and spontaneous out-reach of inward energy—a feeling after companionship—remains in many persons vague to the end. But in others it frequently rises to a definite consciousness of a personal Presence; and there comes back into the soul a compelling evidence of a real Other Self who meets all the Soul's need. . . . Nobody who has learned to pray in this deeper way and whose prayer is a prayer of communion and fellowship, wants logical argument for the existence of God. Such a want implies a fall from a higher to a lower level. It is like a demand for proof of the beauty one feels, or an evidence of love other than the evidence of its existence.[249]

One perceives that behind the pragmatism of Jones's argument, there is mysticism. It is so also with Bautain. Mysticism, not pragmatism, is always his last word. He does not ultimately rest his case upon the fact that we *need* God, but upon the fact that we can *see* God. He does not merely assume and postulate a God to meet his need; he claims to have met Him, and found in Him the complete satisfaction of all his desires. Arguments from Nature, arguments from the moral life, may help a man to find God; but in the last resort he must meet and see Him for himself. He must expose himself to the direct rays of the divine light, and "receive the radiation of Being, as the well-exposed vine receives the radiations of the sun."[250] Then all doubt will vanish. The man who has *seen* God needs no further argument.

Bautain's method of proving the divinity of the Christian revelation is just as original as his method of proving the existence of God. He puts prophecy, miracle, and historical testimony in quite a secondary place, denying the possibility of basing a case on such evidence; and he appeals directly to the faith-awakening power of the Book which contains the revelation, and the Church which announces it—a power due to the perfect correspondence between the Gospel and the soul's need. If the divine is, by definition, what answers completely to the soul's need, then the Gospel, which perfectly passes that test, is necessarily divine.

[249] Rufus Jones, *The Double Search.* Phil., 1906, 101-106.

[250] FB,V10, § 3, note.

Not Hume himself was more radical than Bautain in his attack upon the validity of the old apologetics based on miracle and buttressed with historical criticism. It may be worth while to review his discussion with the Bishop on this point:

Do you think [asked the Bishop] that the Mosaic Revelation is not proved with certitude by the oral and written Tradition of the Synagogue and Christianity?

The Mosaic Revelation [answered Bautain] presents two orders of truths: truths of fact (for it is the history of a nation) and divine truths. [Reason may establish the authenticity of the facts, he admits, but] as for the divine truth or the divinity of this revelation, it is from the start an object of faith, like all that is divine, and you will never prove by reasoning alone to a man of reason without faith, that a book written by the hand of a man is a divine authority for all men. . . .[251]

I will ask you [returned the Bishop] if the proof drawn from the miracles of Jesus Christ, sensible and striking for the eye-witnesses, has lost its force with its brilliancy for subsequent generations? . . .

It will never lose any of its force [replied Bautain, in part] or its striking quality *for believers*. . . . But we are not concerned with the believer. . . . We are concerned with learned pagans, with unbelievers, with deists. Now, how shall one prove the divinity of Jesus Christ and of his Gospel *logically* and by the sole authority of the reason to such men? By the miracles, does some one say? And the miracles—what guarantee will you give of their truth? The Gospel account and the testimony of the Apostles, who were "neither deceivers nor deceived?" . . . Will they not have a right to say to you at the very start that you are begging the question, that you are turning in a circle, the truth of the Gospel revelation which announces the miracles not being susceptible of being *rationally* proved by the miracles—and besides, in establishing that the Apostles, who were *men*, could neither err nor deceive, you suppose a fact just as extraordinary as the very miracles they recount.[252]

Can you expect an unbeliever [asked the Bishop] to admit the Resurrection of our divine Saviour, before providing him with certain proofs of it? And are not these proofs deduced from reasoning?

No [replied Bautain]. I shall not expect an unbeliever to admit on *my word*, however well reasoned, the truth of the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. I shall not even *try* to prove it to him rationally, sure in advance that he would listen to me only with indifference, if not with disgust. . . . What leads men to believe in Jesus Christ, Saviour of men, is the humility of the heart as opposed to the exaltation of the mind and the pretensions of the reason which thinks to be self-sufficient.[253]

[251] *Avertissement*, Q. 2.
[252] *Ibid.*, Q. 3.
[253] *Ibid.*, Q. 4.

Such expressions as these led many to suppose that Bautain did not believe in miracles at all. Three passages in his early essay, "The ethics of the Gospel compared with the ethics of the philosophers," seemed especially shocking, and were exhibited by his critics as a justification for accusing him of heresy:

> It is impossible for us to distinguish true miracles from purely natural facts. . . .
>
> But the miracles of Jesus, those cures contrary to the laws of nature? . . . Well, the miracles were sudden deliverances; they had as their purpose the alleviating of human woes, and Jesus came to earth for no other end than to heal. . . .
>
> When human science shall have explained to us what nature is; when it shall have marked the point up to which its forces and its laws may extend, we may judge whether the extraordinary facts which we designate by the name of miracles are repugnant to the general order, out of line with the common laws, or whether they are not perhaps more outbreaking *(éclatante)* manifestations, more energetic developments of them.[254]

Bautain was of course indignant at the accusation that he did not believe in miracles; it seems indeed a rather ridiculous accusation, when one considers his occultistic tendencies. I doubt if there is a single miracle reported in the Bible or in the lives of the saints which he would have found it impossible, *a priori*, to believe in. It is plain, however, that, in view of his doctrine of the strict organic unity of all creation, and the parallelism between natural and spiritual law, it was impossible for him to look upon miracles as infringements of the universal laws of nature. "We are not inclined to believe, with many theologians," he says, "that they are suspensions or derogations of the laws of nature, which seems to us to imply a contradiction."[255] Wherever the Romantic view of the universe as an *organism* penetrates, the same attitude toward miracles is found; for Romanticism always breaks down the dualism between the natural and the supernatural, and makes the latter appear as the *perfection*, not the contrary, of the former. To the Romanticist, the signs of the divine are not inexplicability, arbitrariness, and lawlessness; rather the divine is that which alone

[254] *Mor. Ev. P.*, 68. [255] FB,H, 17, *verso*.

makes nature comprehensible.[256] Bautain is a true Romanticist at this point; he believes in *miracles* unreservedly, but not in *miracle*, in the old sense.

The way of the apologist is hard; and that of the Catholic apologist is particularly hard. As he sallies forth to convert the infidel, he is conscious that there are certain well-marked limits beyond which he cannot go without being disowned by the faith which he represents. There are certain formulae which he cannot alter, certain admissions which he must not make. Like a diplomat at a peace conference, he may fail in either of two ways: by granting too little, or by granting too much. In the first case he fails to break down the antagonism of the adversary; in the second, he fails to get his terms of capitulation ratified at home. Speaking as a rank outsider, I should say that the Catholic apologist of the traditional type fails for the first of these two reasons. He grants too little. He keeps himself so safely intrenched within traditional phraseology that, while he satisfies his brethren concerning his orthodoxy, and gives them the sense that the faith is being ably defended, he does not even interest the unbeliever, much less convert him. This, after all, is the more abject failure of the two. Why write an apology at all, if it convinces no one but yourself? It is to Bautain's lasting credit that he failed in the second way, and not in the first. Whatever the weaknesses and dangers of his apologetics—and they are many—he did at least make an honest and more or less successful effort to do what every *real* apologist must do: put himself in the place of the unbeliever, face his difficulties as if they were his own, and find a solution for them which is at least *comprehensible* to the unbeliever, because phrased in his language. I defy any non-Catholic to read extensively in Bautain without saying to himself, "Well, at any rate, he makes Catholicism *intelligible* to me. If I could be converted to Catholicism, it would be by *that* sort of argument!"

One cannot help wondering why the Church should prefer the apologist who merely *defends* the faith, to the apologist who really

[256] This explains why the "New Theology" in Protestant circles, which has Romanticist antecedents, tends to minimize the apologetic value of miracles, to which the "Old Theology" still clings. Cf. Horace Bushnell's position in *Nature and the Supernatural* with Franz Baader's "relative supernaturalism."

*propagates* the faith—even if, in the heat of his passion for souls, he is occasionally guilty of stating old doctrines in novel and unconventional terms. One cannot help regretting the fact that, not only in Bautain's day but in more recent years,[257] the traditional apologetic, cold and unconvincing, has always succeeded in crushing out every attempt to present Catholicism in a form acceptable to the modern man. One cannot help sympathizing with the reproach which one of Bautain's half-converted followers addressed to the upholders of the old apologetics:

> We had asked [he writes] whether they intended to go on preaching to unlistening ears, following a method which convinced no one and persuaded no one. . . . We had invited the reactionary clergy to mingle a bit more in our life of anguish and misery; and they did not understand what we meant by that. And, for a fact, have the partisans of scholasticism—of that method which expresses itself practically in hardness of heart—have they ever, in imagination, stretched themselves upon the cross of doubt, and thence directed an understanding glance, a sympathetic glance, toward the multitude of those who are writhing in the anguish of unbelief? *Eh, mais vraiment non.* What does that matter to them? Provided they *avenge* the Church against the infidels (who do not listen to them), their work is accomplished; they have no mission to *convert* them.[258]

[257] I am thinking, of course, of the Abbé Laberthonnière's remarkable *Essais de philosophie religieuse*, put on the Index for being too convincing to the unbeliever!

[258] These are the words of Paul Rochette, a Saint-Simonian Socialist, editor of the *Journal du Haut- et Bas-Rhin*. See his pamphlet in defense of Bautain, *Deux mots à l'ex-élève*, Strasbourg, 1834, 20-21.

## CHAPTER IV

## BAUTAIN'S PLACE IN THE HISTORY OF THOUGHT

IT IS NOT SURPRISING that to many of his contemporaries—even including his former friend and associate, Damiron[1]—Bautain seemed to be a skeptic, mercilessly making war upon all constructive philosophies, and upon reason itself, in order to drive men into the arms of a blind and fanatical faith. If one reads nothing but the critical and polemical pamphlets and articles which first brought him into national prominence, one almost inevitably gets this impression. Nothing stands before his destructive criticism. He attacks all the current philosophical tendencies, one after another; and if, for a time, he appears to ally himself with one tendency rather than another, the alliance is purely strategic. When the common enemy is destroyed, the alliance is dissolved, and he turns to attack his erstwhile comrades. Thus, in his criticism of eighteenth-century philosophy, Bautain makes common cause with all the Romanticists and Idealists, only to turn and criticize the latter more vehemently yet. In his criticism of the scholasticism of the seminaries, he makes common cause with the Traditionalists; but, just as we are about to classify him as a Traditionalist, he turns and launches his sharpest barbs at Lamennais. Naturally, the effect of all this was to make him a host of enemies and get him a reputation as a universal destroyer; and so, when the scholastics finally brought about his ecclesiastical assassination, there was little mourning over his demise—except in Strasbourg, where his constructive philosophy was known.

For us, however, now that we understand the main drift of Bautain's philosophy, these critical essays have a significance quite different. They are not the random shots of an aimless skeptic,

[1] Damiron, *Essai sur l'histoire de la philosophie en France au 19me siècle*, 440-449, esp. 449, where Bautain is called "always critical and never eclectic." "Doubt," says Damiron, "is at the bottom of all his objections, and it is keen, incisive, penetrating, while his dogmatism is not strong enough to reassure the minds which he has shaken at the start. One may easily be led to deny all that he denies, without also being brought to believe all that he believes."

interested in nothing but destruction, but the consistent reactions of a man who occupies a very definite philosophical position, and defends it against all comers. As such, they not only cast great light on the general philosophical situation, but serve to define Bautain's position with great exactitude. If we combine these critical reactions to his contemporaries with his eclectic writings on the history of philosophy, we shall get a very good notion of his philosophical antipathies and affinities, and be in a position to define his place in the history of thought.

## I

## Bautain and His Contemporaries

1. *His critique of eighteenth-century philosophy.*

As we have seen, the reaction against eighteenth-century philosophy was in full swing when Bautain appeared upon the scene. Auguste Comte, who was destined to continue the eighteenth-century tradition and reinstate the natural sciences in philosophy, was still an obscure figure, quite over-shadowed by Victor Cousin and the Eclectics. The Normal School still prevailed over the Polytechnic. We must not be surprised, therefore, to find Bautain referring to the eighteenth century in a tone of derision—very much as our younger contemporaries refer to the Mid-Victorian Epoch—as if the characteristic ideas of that period were already too fully discredited to deserve discussion.

> The metaphysics of Condillac—if metaphysics there be in Condillac—the ethics of Helvetius, the politics of the *Social Contract*, and, brooding over all and in all, the genius or familiar spirit of Voltaire: that is what constituted speculative and practical philosophy in France at the commencement of the nineteenth century. It was materialism, sensualism, or egoism in action. And so every one at that epoch was a philosopher, and all the theories of the natural sciences decorated themselves pompously and ridiculously with the name of philosophy. It is thus that we had the philosophy of chemistry, of botany, of physics, of astronomy, of anatomy. And with so many philosophers and in the midst of so many philosophies, there was really nothing that merited the name, or rather there remained only the name.[2]

If Bautain were asked what, in general, was the trouble with

this pseudo-philosophy which he so despised, he would answer just as any Romanticist might answer: the trouble was that the eighteenth-century philosophers, by trusting too exclusively to discursive reason, had lost the intuition of the organic Whole, and been reduced to an abstract, piecemeal, mechanical view of things. This criticism is best expressed in an eloquent passage in one of Bautain's manuscript courses entitled *Philosophie théologique et mathématique*[3]—probably the very course with which he opened his private class at Mlle. Humann's, after his suspension:

> One should not *think* the universe, *make* it, or *construct* it, actively and arbitrarily, without acquaintance with the plan or with its laws; but one should *see* it as it is, receive and reflect its action; one should contemplate and ideate it, to obtain the idea and the science[4] of it. If then the human mind . . . had been able to content itself with the simple aspect of nature, seeing her and reflecting her as she lives and exists before it; . . . if, more faithful to his law, man had applied himself to the contemplation of that Nature; . . . if, with a pure soul and a single eye, he had embraced her in her unity, as he embraces or envisages the vault of heaven, as he embraces or envisages a living organism, as he considers or admires a work of art; if he had insisted upon seeing the parts only in their . . . relations to each other and the whole, and never in isolation, each for itself, by section, division, and abstraction; if, finally, he had remembered that it is not by changing zenith and running about the earth that he can enlarge his horizon, but by mounting vertically and raising himself above it—we should even to-day have but a single science, as there is but a single universe.[5]

It was the fatal mistake of eighteenth-century philosophy, one gathers, to lose this view of the concrete, living whole, and replace it by a "rational anatomy, operating only upon corpses,"[6] whereby "we separate incessantly that which is identical in itself, that which nature has united."[7] The world was thus reduced from an organism to "*une belle machine*, an ingenious mechanism, a great clock,"[8] which could be taken to pieces and put together again; and, to complete the absurdity of the process, the abstract relations

[2] *Phil. Chr.*, II, 21-22. [3] FB,V10.

[4] *Science* is generally a technical term with Bautain. It stands in contrast to *connaissance*, and represents true metaphysical knowledge as over against empirical knowledge. Cf. Plato's twice-divided line. *Ideas* stand in the same contrast to *notions*.

[5] FB,V10, §§ 6, 7.

[6] *Ibid.*, § 17.

[7] *Ibid.*, § 15.

[8] *Ibid.*, § 8.

and magnitudes of these mechanical parts were hypostatized and treated as real entities.[9] In this artificial world of his own creation, man found himself to be an anomaly and a helpless wanderer —"a broken column, without summit, and without base, rolling in the wave of time."[10]

The only eighteenth-century philosopher to whom Bautain gives the courtesy of a detailed critique, in his review of recent philosophical tendencies, is Condillac. The fundamental difficulty with his philosophy is that it is based upon an atomistic and intellectualistic psychology. "The final result of its efforts is to explain how an abstraction is formed; and it naïvely believes itself to have explained man, when it has given an account, according to its method, of how he forms a generalization."[11] As a matter of fact, Condillac's famous statue never fully came to life; nothing is fully alive that is merely sentient or intellectual, and lacks "the will, the *foyer* of the life."[12] A philosophy based upon such an artificial and truncated psychology is vitiated from the start.

Here again Bautain shows himself a true Romanticist; a tendency toward voluntarism in psychology is characteristic of the period.

2. *Critique of the Scotch School.*

For Bautain, the great merit of the Scotch philosophy, in which he was trained, lay in its empiricism. It does not play fast and loose with the facts, or build air-castles of abstractions; it applies the methods of Bacon in the field of psychology, and refuses to assert anything which introspection does not confirm. Condillac had banished the soul and the moral life from psychology; the Scotch school, unable to account for such *noumena*, yet admits them under the name of "first principles" or "primitive facts" in which one must believe—"so true is it," remarks Bautain, "that in order to know or learn anything one must start from faith in a principle."[13]

But although the Scotch school has enriched philosophy with a great deal of valuable psychological data, it is open to serious question whether by its methods the foundations of a systematic philoso-

[9] FB,V10, § 10. [10] *Ibid.*, § 8. [11] *Ens. Phil. F.*, xviii. (Roman numerals refer to the version prefixed to the *Psych. Exp.*, arabics to the pamphlet edition.) [12] *Ibid.*, xix. [13] *Phil. Chr.*, II, 30.

phy can be solidly laid. For one thing, as Bautain points out, the fundamental truths of common sense, of which the Scotch philosophy makes so much, have been "singularly multiplied, . . . so that every time they encounter a fact in the human mind which they cannot resolve into anterior facts, and where admission is nevertheless necessary to explain others, they set it up as a primitive fact of human nature, greet it with the name of first principle, and thus make of it a sort of dogma, a philosophical article of faith."[14] What assurance have we that these supposedly "primitive" facts of consciousness are any more irreducible than the supposedly "simple" elements of modern chemistry? Do they not rather represent unsolved problems, complex phenomena "undecomposed up to date."[15] Furthermore, it has been proved by Kant that the "first principles" at which one arrives by an analysis of the human consciousness are purely relative and subjective. If we are to form a true picture of the real world, we must try to escape from precisely those subjective categories upon which the Scotch philosophy rests with all its weight.

Even supposing the Scotch philosophy to be true as far as it goes, it falls absurdly short of the sort of philosophy we all demand, for it has nothing to say on ultimate questions. As with Baconian science in general, the significance of the Scotch psychology lies in its practical utility, not in its metaphysical adequacy. It deals only with phenomena; the "laws" it discovers are laws of sequence and not of real causality; if it admits the existence of *noumena*, they simply play the rôle of colorless limiting concepts, of which nothing definite can be affirmed. "One ought not give the name of *science* to descriptions which at bottom explain nothing," says Bautain, "nor, above all, attempt to philosophize in that fashion. Monographs on the faculties, hanging together no more consistently than the treatises of our Physics courses or the chapters of our Physiology books, do not give the science of man."[16] As to immortality and other ultimate questions, the Scotch say cautiously that their answers are "not yet ascertained."

It is necessary, as you see, then [explodes Bautain] to adjourn decision

[14] *Ibid.*, 29-30.
[15] *Choses*, 422.
[16] *Ens. Phil. F.*, xxv.

on the spirituality and immortality of the soul indefinitely, since in the three thousand years that men have busied themselves with philosophy they have not been able to gather enough facts to prove this important truth. But until then, until that grave question is settled, if humanity, if man had no other sources of conviction, no other motives for hope and certitude than the inductions of the Scottish philosophy, what would become of him in his every-day life? Man cannot remain ignorant or indifferent where questions of this sort are concerned, without degrading himself. But all these problems are admitted to be insoluble by the Scotch school: it disdains to deal with them, treating them as impertinent questions—and to be sure they are very embarrassing for a doctrine which, in trying to explain man, sees in him only an existence, and takes him for a bare fact. After all, he who is willing to believe only in the testimony of his speculative and rational consciousness (for the moral conscience is not here considered) can admit only the facts that it perceives. Now it can perceive only what affects it in the present moment; . . . hence it is clear that the Scotch school, to be faithful to its principle, must repudiate all questions of origin, nature, and destiny.[17]

3. *Critique of German Idealism and French Eclecticism. Le panthéisme, voilà l'ennemi!*

Up to this point Bautain has been speaking quite as a German Idealist or a French Eclectic might have spoken. They, too, criticized the mechanistic view of the world, and came out for a vitalistic, dynamic, organic cosmology; they, too, were dissatisfied with the cautious and piecemeal philosophy of the Scotch realists, and, trusting in the higher faculties, launched out *en pleine métaphysique*. Bautain is in hearty sympathy with the idealistic reaction against extreme realism and extreme materialism; and, so far as the *motives* and *intentions* of the Idealists are concerned, he finds them admirable: "it is the need they feel of reducing all truth to a single truth, to unity, after all has been broken and scattered; it is the desire for constructing, building, consolidating, now that the process of sapping, destroying, overturning has lasted so long."[18]

Yet even while he views this reaction with approval, he points out that it has gone too far. In *epistemology*, the eighteenth century had overstressed the rôle of the *object* in the knowing process, to the point of denying the spontaneity of the knowing subject, and making the mind a mere *tabula rasa*, "having only the capacity

[17] *Phil. Chr.*, II, 33-35. [18] *Ibid.*, 155.

to receive the imprint which the object leaves upon it." Realism of this sort had determinism and materialism for its natural consequences; for it explained man "more by his exterior and what surrounds him than by what he is in himself." But the German Idealists, true to their introspective national temperament, have rushed to the opposite extreme, and "pretend to dominate reality, if not to create it." "All comes from the subject," they say, "and the object, if it exists, is only the unknown cause or even the occasion of the development of the subject, who draws all knowledge from himself, and posits it outwardly by his innate need of manifesting himself, objectivizing himself, so that the universe is the manifestation of man's ideas."[19]

> Formerly [says Bautain] we were offered, as the science of man and nature, experiments, particular observations, descriptions, words. To-day, there is first laid down the Idea, the principle that each bears in himself. The idea contains everything; all that remains to be done is to open it out and draw from it its consequences, which every one deduces, as a matter of fact, to suit himself, so that our scientific systems bear a strong resemblance to poetic creations. . . . They are immense frames which remain empty, general views which are not filled in, magnificent programmes which are not realized. . . . Hence great confusion in doctrine, which is taken for unity, much obscurity which is thought to be profundity, and a vast vagueness which is called universality.[20]

The criticism of idealistic epistemology here stated is essentially the same as that which is implied in the title of a recent book of Professor Santayana's: *Absolute Egotism in German Philosophy*. Absolute subjectivism, or mysticism, based on absolute egotism—such is Bautain's characterization of the idealistic position. How accurate it is, one is somewhat at a loss to say, for, as Professor Baudin remarks, "Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel had taken advantage of Kant's absence, and not written their theories of knowledge"; yet as one thinks over all the great systems of the Romantic period, and asks where they got their central ideas and how they justify them, one realizes that something very like a mystic intuition, unproved and unprovable, lies at the heart of each. Is Bautain far wrong when he gives the following description of an Idealist

[19] See *Psych. Exp.*, I, 225, 229, for all quotations in this paragraph.

[20] *Phil. Chr.*, II, 161-162.

in the act of conceiving the Idea on which he is to base his system? Would it apply only to Schelling in the midst of one of his "intellectual intuitions," or also to Hegel? Was not Hegel suspiciously touchy about the accusation of Mysticism?

> For him, the subjective and the objective, the contemplating mind with the idea which is the fruit of contemplation, and the contemplated object or ideal, are confounded. There, all oppositions disappear, all distinctions are effaced; contraries are absorbed in the point of indifference or absolute identity; there is no longer either God or universe, but only the *idea* . . . the mind knowing itself in the known idea as being itself all, and all being itself.[21]

In this passage, it is the accusation of mysticism which is stressed; yet the great fault of the Idealists, in Bautain's eyes, is not their mysticism—he himself is a mystic, as we have seen—but their subjectivism, which is rooted in their moral egotism. There is a radical difference, for Bautain, between a mysticism which consists in opening oneself to the influence of the whole external world, natural, social, and divine, and then trusting the intuitions which are born of that intercourse, and a mysticism which consists in cutting oneself off from the universe by taking an attitude of proud self-sufficiency, and then trusting one's own subjective intuitions.

> Behold these proud philosophers [he cries] who wish to join to the dignity of morality the triumph of independence! They talk incessantly about the absolute, and they know only phenomena. . . . Shut up as they are in the narrow sphere of their understanding, they cannot escape the law of contradiction which dominates there. Their will stiffens itself with all its force so as not to yield to any influence of word or of example, so as to obey nothing but itself; and at any moment an impulsion from without comes and adds itself to the will's *motus proprius*, complicates it unawares, and makes it deviate. They think themselves independent; and they are modified every instant of their lives by what surrounds them. They think themselves heroes of virtue, of disinterestedness, of greatness of soul; and they do not see that the *Ego* being the sole principle of their actions is also their end, and that they are thus held within the vicious circle of Egoism.[22]

Subjectivism in epistemology leads inevitably to spiritualistic

[21] FB,V3, § 25.

[22] *Phil. Chr.*, I, 63-64.

pantheism in *cosmology*. As the eighteenth-century philosophers, with their realistic objectivism, had fastened their attention on the external forms of things, and missed their inner life, so the Idealists, with their intense subjectivism, were fastening their attention upon the inner world of life and spirit, and neglecting the facts of natural science, which alone could give stability and veracity to their philosophical constructions. A world of spirit without form (pantheistic spiritualism) is as bad as a world of form without spirit (mechanistic materialism).[23] Yet this is the view to which the egotistic subjectivism of the Idealist irresistibly drives him.

> If man . . . entering into his own depths, gathering himself energetically together to seize in his deepest subjectivity the being which he seeks . . . isolates himself from what surrounds him . . . and tries to live in the pure and simple feeling of the life he wishes to seize in its principle and its nature . . . feeling himself within himself, strong, powerful, free, immortal; feeling himself with all the energy of his *Ego*, and confusing the action of the objective Being, who posited him and sustains him, with the reaction of his own nature which answers to it, he declares that the Universe, the world, the multiple existences, are but illusions and appearances; that God alone is . . . that is, *himself* feeling himself to be. . . . Here the human self is deified; it is pantheism at its highest stage; it is the absolute identity of the Hindoos; it is the transcendental egoism of the moderns.[24]

The disease of Idealism is now diagnosed: *Pantheism!* Arrived at this point in his criticism of the German philosophers, Bautain henceforth pays no more attention to the details of their philosophies. Beneath the minor points of difference which distinguish Fichte's transcendental *Ego* from Schelling's Absolute, Schleiermacher's *Universum*, and Hegel's Idea, he discerns a common pantheistic creed, involving the confusion of God, Man, and the Universe, and the blurring of all distinctions. He states this common creed in the following terms:

> As the universe in its unfolding is distinguished into two parts, the ideal and the real, the knower and the known, so science also is divided into two sections:

[23] FB,V10, § 14.
[24] Goschler, *Du Panthéisme*, 11-12. These words of Goschler perfectly reflect Bautain's own views.

(1). Pure philosophy or the contemplation of the Absolute in itself, above and independent of all forms, of all phenomena—this is the science of the Holy of Holies, reserved for the most advanced initiates.

(2). Applied philosophy, which is but a vast symbolism, expressing the development of the One or the All, in the passing formulæ of humanity and of the world. [This alone, says Bautain, is taught exoterically. Although purposely cloaked in baffling obscurities, it] flatters the mind most remarkably, because from this height one thinks to dominate everything.[25]

Was German Idealism really an esoteric religious cult, preaching a pantheistic faith under cover of philosophical terminology? Such an accusation seems a bit fantastic; and I doubt if Bautain meant it seriously. Had he cared to press the charge in all soberness, he might have pointed to the esoteric tendency which ran through the whole Romantic movement: the wide gulf between the "man of genius" and the vulgar herd, with whom (since they were incapable of understanding him and quite capable of turning and rending him) he could communicate only in tropes and parables! However the accusation is to be understood, Bautain was undoubtedly alarmed at the rapid spread of Romantic Pantheism among the educated youth of France and Germany. As he found it cropping out in the most unexpected quarters, and subtly permeating the whole intellectual atmosphere, he may well have sensed a vast conspiracy, and felt himself called upon to warn the whole world against the oncoming pestilence. As he lifts his voice to describe the evil consequences of Pantheism—the scourge of the nineteenth century, as Materialism was the scourge of the eighteenth—he becomes eloquent, and almost prophetic.

In *religion*, says Bautain, Pantheism means the abandonment of all norms of judgment, and the simultaneous acceptance of rival creeds and rival codes. The only essential thing in religion is the adoration of the Absolute, and all religions equally typify "the manifestation of the Infinite, the triumph of spirit over matter, the victory of the idea over the form."[26] Each was a necessary stage in the evolution of the Absolute, and all will pass away, to give way to new creeds and codes that will reveal a new possibility of existence, till the richness of the Idea has at last been fully

[25] *Phil. Chr.*, II, 156. [26] *Ibid.*, 158.

unfolded, for "God . . . is everything, and everything is God; especially man, for it is in humanity that the Absolute reaches self-consciousness. . . . The ethics of such a religion consists in the development of life, as intense as possible, and in all its forms, in order to free the idea from its shackles and aid in the manifestation of the great All."[27] Charity and other definitely conceived virtues give place to vague notions like "harmony" and "fusion"; piety becomes an indefinite and universal aspiration toward the Infinite, valued largely for aesthetic reasons, and cultivated as an emotional outlet. "How many of our contemporaries," says Bautain, "are religious after this fashion, in the imagination more than in the soul, more from artistic taste than from a recognized need of God!"[28] What they love, he remarks, is not truth and holiness but Gothic architecture and picturesque ceremonies.

In *art* and *literature*, the beautiful is confused with the ugly. The object of art, say the pantheists, is not the imitation of natural beauty but "the manifestation of the idea by the form." Everything falls under this formula; all things are manifestations of the All, and hence good subjects for art.

> Hence the principal traits which characterize and disfigure the art of our day: the affectation of the grandiose, which tries to give the feeling of the All in each thing, and reveal profundity even in the slightest details, which results in a sublime grotesque, as the exaggerated expression of the trivial and the ugly gives the ignoble and the horrible; the pretention to follow no rule, because genius knows none, because enthusiasm cannot constrain itself thereto; the violation of the moral laws and the rules of decency, which fetter, they say, by arbitrary conventions, the expression of the beautiful and the sublime.[29]

In *morals*, the distinction between good and evil breaks down. Since all is a necessary unfolding of the Idea, all is justified, when looked at from a high enough point of view. The pantheist "sees God everywhere, and good in everything—simply because it *is*."[30] Virtue consists in floating with the stream of the *Zeitgeist*, "that irresistible force which bears the century along and which is manifested by what we call opinion,"[31] and in giving free course to the vital instincts that are the voice of God speaking within.

[27] *Ibid.*, 159. [28] *Ibid.*, 163. [30] *Mor. Ev. D.*, 341.
[29] *Ibid.*, 163-164. [31] *Phil. Chr.*, II, 164.

The principles of this morality might be formulated somewhat as follows:

One must follow the movement of nature, spontaneity, instinct; abandon oneself to the passions which spring up in the heart, to all the desires which sweep us with them, all the impressions which carry us away.[32]

Life is an endless series of transformations, an incessant metempsychosis, a purposeless phantasmagoria, a *je ne sais quoi*.[33]

All is permissible for man, all is within his rights: his power has no limit but his will, his will no bounds but his good pleasure.[34]

If All is One, there is neither good nor ill.[35]

In *politics*, as in private life, all morality and all liberty disappear. The State becomes supreme and irresponsible.

For [says Bautain] you are no longer persons, individuals, citizens; you are the branches of a tree, the radiations of a centre, the movements of a force, the modifications of a substance. There is no more liberty for you in society than in the universe; for society, in order to be true, must be made in the image and likeness of the great All. And so just as in the universe it is the One which produces All, and all the existences are but its modes and instruments, so in politics you are to be the modes and instruments of the All which is called the State. The State—a great word about which a lot of furore is made, but which, after all, always means *some one*—the State is All, and must do everything in its interest and for its glory; the rest is nothing.[36]

And how will the pantheistic State conduct itself among the nations of the world? Bautain's answer is startling in its prophetic insight:

Where necessity rules, there is no longer any question of justice, virtue, conscience, and remorse, there are simply questions of public safety and *raisons d'Etat* which imperiously demand such and such a measure; and that measure is just, because it is necessary. The interests of a few men may be injured thereby; that is a private misfortune which is obliterated in the common good: these are eventualities which disappear in the transcendental view of history, as little things vanish in a vast horizon. From that height, one sees the life of the great All developing in the

[32] *Mor. Ev. D.*, 343.
[33] *Ibid.*, 342.
[34] Goschler, *op. cit.*, 134.
[35] *Phil. Chr.*, II, 166.
[36] *Mor. Ev. D.*, 344-345.

life of the peoples, manifesting itself energetically by their agitations, and often unable to break forth except by terrific catastrophes. Hence comes the shock of nations one against another, and war, without which nothing great is accomplished. It is at the cost of blood that the manifestation of the Idea in this world takes place; and it is always the Idea which triumphs. It is therefore the *fact*, that is, force, which finally decides the fate of peoples, and on the field of battle as in the market-place, to be right, one must be the stronger: the law is always on the side of the conqueror.[37]

*Realpolitik* and von Treitschke, predicted in the first half of the nineteenth century! If we admire Professor Dewey's perspicacity in tracing a connection, after the event, between German philosophy and politics, what shall we say of Bautain, who predicted the consequences of that philosophy before the event? It is only fair to add that Bautain has no animus against the Germans as such, and aims his attack quite as much against the Eclectics as against the Idealists.

As for Eclecticism, Bautain pours contempt upon it as all converts tend to pour contempt upon everything they did and thought while they were yet in their sins. "We set ourselves," he says, reminiscently, "to write the history of philosophy, because we had no philosophy, with the intention of composing one by means of the products of all the schools, diverse and even contradictory as they were. It was a case of trying to make truth out of all the errors."[38] How choose between rival doctrines when you have no criterion of truth?

Bautain grants that Eclecticism is not pantheistic to the core; it is a *petit panthéisme*, mingled with many other ingredients.[39] Cousin was too prudent to leave his unorthodoxy unveiled, and it was only in certain involuntary expressions like "the Trinity of the Infinite, the Finite, and their relations, or God, Nature, and Humanity," that he revealed it. Yet in one aspect of his teaching, and that a most essential one, he reveals, says Bautain, that confusion of opposites which is the chief characteristic of pantheism:

[37] *Phil. Chr.*, II, 164-165.

[38] *Choses*, 422-423.

[39] Cf. *Cerc. Cath.*, 55, where Bautain says that Eclecticism "has not the courage of its convictions or of its sympathies; it wanted to be Hegelian and had not the audacity; it professed to be Christian and had not the faith; it is pantheistic without wishing to be, and it is not Christian though wishing to appear so."

he tends to admit all philosophical doctrines upon an equal footing, and so blurs the distinction between true and false. In the Eclectic view, each epoch in the history of thought, "no matter how perverted it may appear," has its place. "It was destined to represent a certain phase in the evolution of humanity: . . . all that exists is a fact, and every fact is what it should be, by the very fact that it is." And so the most heterogeneous elements go into the eclectic mortar: Epicurus and Zeno, Aristotle and Plato, Kant and the Sentimentalists, all find themselves forcibly reconciled.

> And now [concludes Bautain] mix it, stir it, pound it, and crush it to impalpability, so that nothing will be recognizable in the mixture . . . in order that there may be fusion and not confusion, and we may not be accused of syncretism, whereas we are making an Eclecticism. You will put that word on the label, and when sick minds and souls come to ask you for remedies for their ills, you will administer this eclectic powder to them in little packets. They will take one a day, until nausea ensues. Then you will stop! . . . The remedy will have produced its effect, and they will be cured—probably, of philosophy.[40]

Bautain's attitude toward the Romantic philosophy is thus curiously ambivalent. On the one hand, he is not merely an ally of the Romanticists for certain strategic purposes; he is, in some of his most fundamental conceptions, an out-and-out Romanticist. His vitalistic cosmology and his voluntaristic psychology are Romantic to the core; and even his central religious doctrine of the limited spontaneity of the individual and his need of stimulation from above reminds us strangely of Schleiermacher's "feeling of absolute dependence." Yet, on the other hand, as we have just seen, there are times when Bautain appears to think of this same Romantic tendency, of which he is himself so much a part, as if it were a peril, a curse, a thing to be fought and extirpated. At such times, he reminds not of Schleiermacher, but—to pursue the Protestant parallel—of Albrecht Ritschl; for, like Ritschl, he has too keen a sense of the peculiar genius of Christianity to attempt to reconcile it with its irreconcilable enemies; and, like Ritschl, he feels that the most irreconcilable enemy of Christianity, as of all ethical religions, is that form of idealistic pantheism in which good

[40] *Mor. Ev. D.*, 313-314.

and evil become equally divine, and iniquity is justified because all that is, is right. We shall be still more strongly reminded of Ritschl—and of Protestantism—when we come to understand the motives that underlay Bautain's crusade against the Scholastic philosophy that prevailed in the Catholic seminaries.

4. *Critique of Scholasticism.*

Bautain's aversion for Scholasticism sprang originally, perhaps, from a certain native antipathy toward "logic-chopping"; but it was immensely strengthened by his perception of the inability of Scholasticism to meet and refute Pantheism. It was a fact, in his own observation, that scholastically trained priests were unable to cope with the intellectual difficulties which cultured young pantheists, in increasing numbers, were bringing to them for solution; and so many a troubled and wistful inquirer, Christian at heart but intellectually perplexed, was turned away unsatisfied. In a brilliant passage of the *Philosophie du Christianisme*,[41] Bautain confronts such a priest with a young pantheist, and shows, in the ensuing dialogue, how Scholasticism plays into the hands of Pantheism.

The priest begins with the traditional arguments for the existence of God. "Don't take the trouble, I beg of you," interrupts the youth. "I, with you, proclaim the necessity of the Being who is in Himself; and it is just because I have recognized Him as the only necessary being that I can see in all contingent beings mere modifications of His substance, more or less limited expressions of His nature." Shocked at this pantheistic position, the priest replies that it is absurd to reduce all things to one substance; there is an irreducible difference between thinking substance and extended substance. To this Cartesian distinction the youth objects that Descartes' own definition of substance ("that which subsists in itself") leads to pantheism, for "only one Being subsists in itself." After some inconclusive sparring about the definition of substance and mode, the priest returns to the argument from motion to a Prime Mover, which he thinks establishes the existence of a transcendent and extra-mundane deity. The youth replies that this is exactly the line of reasoning which has led him into "what you call Pantheism and I call transcendental philosophy."

[41] *Phil. Chr.*, II, 168-177.

Those [he continues] who from the existence of the world infer a cause outside the world, evidently exceed the legitimate force of the law of causality. . . . The effect which issued from the cause must have been in it before appearing outside of it. The cause merely posited itself externally, or, as the philosophers say, it made itself its own object. . . . Whether it be *eminenter* or *formaliter*, ideally or really, that the world is in the First Cause, or the First Cause in the world, it follows none the less from your cosmological or teleological argument that the universe such as we behold it has issued from God as the effect of God the cause—that it is God made manifest.

As this argument reduces the priest to a state of incoherency, the youth turns to the attack, and politely suggests that the dualistic cosmology which his opponent has been defending is, after all, somewhat unspiritual, and, at any rate, not in accord with the facts:

I know of nothing inert and absolutely dead in nature [he urges]. In the denser bodies, in the minerals, there is a continual oscillation of their molecules. See the prodigious activity of the gases. . . . It is the spirit, you will say, which animates them, and I agree; but then what becomes of the sharp difference, the essential difference, between two terms which penetrate each other perpetually, which unite and mingle in the same life? If you regard them as opposed by nature, you take away the possibility of explaining their commerce . . . whether in man between his soul and his body or in the universe between God and the world.

The priest now begins to utter angry reproaches. The root of this doctrine is human pride, he cries. The Triune God is above all creation. The youth disclaims any intention to be impious. "If I must above all believe in a God who is above and outside of nature," he says, "you ought not to have tried to demonstrate his existence to me by the forms of the world. . . . I have no repugnance against admitting the God of the Christians; but, in order to believe in him as you do, I should need either infused faith or a satisfactory theory of the great fact of creation. I should need to have the history of man, and that of Christianity, justified by the needs and conscience of humanity." The priest—not having been trained in Bautain's school—has no reply to make, and the young man goes away disappointed.

The old apologetic then, in which everything rested upon certain rational proofs of the existence of God, is bankrupt; for the modern

mind, it has lost all power to convince. Bautain is of the opinion that Kant has given the *coup de grâce* to all the traditional arguments for the existence of God;[42] but he has certain additional objections of his own, particularly against the cosmological and teleological arguments. Not only is the cosmological argument invalid, but, further, if it were valid, *it would not give us the God of religion.* Actually, it plays into the hands of Pantheism; ideally and at its best, it gives us only the God of the Deists. Here is how Adéodat puts the matter:

> Something, they say, exists; something has always existed; hence something exists necessarily. They call that a metaphysical proof; they pretend to discover the eternity of a cause through the medium of ephemeral existences that have not an instant of stability! And suppose it were so, suppose they had proved to me that this X-God was the prime mover who makes spheres turn round, and that he is the power that hurls the planets through space and maintains them in their orbits; once more, what would this god mean for the need of the heart? What pledge of continuance and protection will he give to the desires and hopes of my soul? And without these pledges of protection and continuance, what motive have I to make him the object of my love?[43]

Bautain never tires of reiterating the contention that between the God of the cosmological argument (the God of the Deists) and the God of Hebrew-Christian tradition, there is simply nothing in common.

> O my friends [he writes to his Jewish disciples at the very beginning of his correspondence with them], do you realize, then, that between a true Israelite and a deist there is the same difference as between a civilized man and a child growing up in savagery? The god of the deist is force, nature, fate, destiny: it is a general cause, assumed to exist because the reason demands a cause for the effects it perceives, . . . a gross image, . . . or else . . . a rational entity, an abstraction, an idol of the mind. . . . And that is what you would substitute for the God of Israel and of Moses, the living God who created man in his image, animated him with his Spirit, and preserves him with his Providence![44]

[42] For a telling use of Kant's objections to the cosmological argument, see Bautain's letter to Riambourg, FB,K, *Cahier* I, 35. As we have seen, Bautain thinks more highly of the ontological, psychological, and moral arguments than of the cosmological and teleological; but he thinks they must be entirely recast if they are to appeal to the modern man.

[43] *Phil. Chr.*, I, 209-210.

[44] *Ibid.*, 19-21.

"God of Abraham, God of Isaac, God of Jacob . . . *not* the God of the philosophers and the savants!"—this phrase from Pascal's amulet might be taken as the summary of Bautain's critique of the cosmological argument. But the teleological argument escapes no better: if the cosmological argument leads to Pantheism or Deism, the teleological argument leads to Manichaeism. Once we begin to note differences of good and evil in the cosmos, we get, not indeed an indifferent God, cause of good and evil alike, but two rival deities:

> This world in which we live is but an arena, a vast battlefield, where all is opposition and contradiction, where life, by which nature and all the creatures are and subsist, is but a perpetual struggle with death.[45]
>
> This world is a mixture of good and evil; in it contraries reveal themselves, in conflict with one another: life and death, health and sickness, light and darkness, truth and falsehood, etc. Now, opposite effects arguing opposite causes, there are therefore two contrary causes which share this world between them; they are in conflict, etc. Where is the One, Infinite, Omnipotent God?[46]

If we were to sum up the gist of Bautain's objections to the whole traditional apologetic, we should have to say that its great error, to Bautain, lay in the attempt to find God through Nature. Not that he disdains the argument from Nature altogether. We have already seen what large use he makes of it in his own constructive system. What he insists upon is simply that it *must* not be made a strictly logical argument, else God will be dragged down to Nature's level; it must be purely an argument from analogy, a tracing of parallels between natural and spiritual law. The primary argument is from man's deepest moral need; the God of Man thus discovered may later be found to be the God of Nature also, but if we seek for Him in Nature we shall discover—the wrong God. "What it is important for a man to know is not merely the Author of Nature, the great Architect, the soul of the world, etc.; it is above all *his* Author, *his* God, the God of man; and Nature is mute on this subject."[47]

So far, Bautain has been criticizing Scholasticism simply for its maladroitness in apologetics. The philosophy of the schools, he

[45] *De l'impuissance de la raison, Rev. Eur.*, IV, 63.

[46] FB,K, *Cahier* I, 35.

[47] *Phil. Chr.*, I, 194.

points out, is not aware that a new enemy is upon it; it is trying to fight with spears and pikes against guns and cannon. Here is Pantheism "breaking out to-day in every part of the world, beleaguering, so to speak, the civilization of our time, . . . and destined to overturn everything when it shall have conquered everything"[48]—and the official philosophers of the Church, like pig-headed old generals, not only refuse to adopt new tactics themselves, but cry heresy and treason against all innovators! Why, cries Bautain, should a revision of tactics be considered heretical? The Church has *always* changed her apologetics to suit the times. Scholasticism was a much decried innovation in its day; the Cartesian revision of French Scholasticism, under Bossuet and Malebranche, was equally revolutionary in its day; is it not high time for French Catholic thought once more to come to grips with contemporary philosophy, as German Catholic thought has already done?[49]

It was to this safe and sane position that Bautain commonly retreated when attacked by his critics; but his criticism of Scholasticism went much deeper than this. *Why* did the conventional apologetic play into the hands of Pantheism? Was it merely that its method of defense was outgrown, though good enough in its own day? No, its weakness was something worse than that: *it was itself tainted with Pantheism.* Somehow or other, in grappling with their antagonists, the defenders of the faith had themselves been overthrown and dragged down into the mud. In seeking to meet the human reason, and fight it with its own weapons, they had themselves been led into rationalism; and rationalism, thinks Bautain, always leads in the end to Pantheism, if not to atheism. All this comes out in his critique of the *Philosophie de Lyon.* This, it may be remembered, was the semi-Cartesian system of philosophy, couched in Scholastic Latin, which Bautain himself was ordered to teach in his *Petit Séminaire,* when suspicion began to fall upon him. It had been for years the standard philosophical text in most of the French seminaries.[50]

In the first place, says Bautain, the *Philosophie de Lyon* is all wrong in its methodology. Like Cartesianism, it abstracts from

[48] *Ibid.*, II, 148.
[49] *Ibid.*, introduction to Letter 28.
[50] See *supra*, chapter 1, note 65.

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experience and tradition altogether, and tries to spin the universe out of the individual reason. It has adopted Descartes' procedure of systematic doubt:

when one wishes to philosophize . . . one must abstract oneself from received beliefs and lay aside acquired convictions, that they may have no influence whatsoever upon the scientific procedure of the reason, which is to raise anew the edifice of knowledge; . . . one must discourse upon God, man, and their relations, as if God had never taught us anything about Himself and about ourselves. . . . It is as if they were told to give up the brightness of the day, to contemplate the spectacle of nature at night, by the light of a torch. And so how many of these poor young men when they leave the school, never recover that unsullied faith which had guided them from infancy. . . . There happens to them, most often, what has happened to the whole modern world: it began by parting with faith to cultivate knowledge; it entertained the supposition that it had no faith, and, reasoning in accordance with this supposition, it got lost; the heart of man became filled with darkness, and then accustoming himself to get along without faith, he ended by having none.[51]

Despising faith, tradition, and experience, the *Philosophie de Lyon* absurdly exaggerates the importance of reasoning and dialectic. Its great and fundamental fallacy is to think of logic as an existential science, and the syllogism as an instrument of discovery. This is the error of *all* Scholasticism, which may, in fact, be defined as "logic applied to questions of metaphysics and morals."[52] Bautain wonders at the naïveté of philosophers who attach such magical efficacy to the mere process of ratiocination.

You cannot believe in the existence of God, in the immortality of the soul? It is because you have not looked at these matters logically and according to the rules. A good syllogism will dissipate all your doubts—provided you admit the premises beforehand; otherwise we must give up the attempt to convince you. But be assured that no one but a fool or an impious person can resist the force of a valid argument.[53]

All this is absurd. "It follows from the very nature of the syllogism," says Bautain, "that it is not the instrument of any discovery";[54] for one must have perceived by the intelligence the

[51] *Phil. Chr.*, II, 61-62. [52] *Ibid.*, 58. [53] *Ibid.*, 66. [54] *Ibid.*, 68.

relation of the three terms before one can set it forth, and it is just in that intellectual intuition of the relation that the true discovery lies. "It is the insight *(regard)* of genius which discovers";[55] the syllogism is merely a means of "exposition," to set things forth for slower minds.

The trouble with Scholasticism is that it has never realized the limitations of the reasoning process as a way to knowledge; it has never undertaken a "critique of the reason." It has no means of undertaking such a critique; for it should be based on a knowledge of psychology, and how work out a good psychology when "one disdains the study of natural facts and is not willing to draw one's philosophy from revealed principles?"[56] As a matter of fact, Scholasticism presupposes the wholly inadequate psychology which regards intellectual processes as the sum and substance of all that goes on in the mind, neglecting volition and emotion altogether. "It defines man as a reasonable animal," says Bautain, "and the soul as a thinking substance [Aristotle plus Descartes], because it is with thought and the reason that it is going to do all the rest."[57]

Bautain is convinced that, as a general rule, Rationalism and Pantheism go together; and, in the case of the *Philosophie de Lyon*, he finds an instance of this rule. In this philosophy, the fundamental metaphysical notion is that of *Being in General*. This notion is obtained "by making abstraction from the species and from the individuals which limit the universal notion of being."[58] The result is a pure *notion*, signifying simply "the manner in which the mind can envisage all the existences, without dwelling on their properties and generic qualities."[59] Being in General, that is, is nothing in particular: "pure negation of all that constitutes existence, form, quality, properties, attributes, relations, etc."[60] The resulting conception is extremely hard to distinguish from the conception of *Nothing:* "Being in General is what does not exist or what the reason conceives as not existing."[61] The effort is made to save a remnant of concreteness by calling Being in General the opposite of Nothing; but Nothing is then defined as

[55] *Ibid.*
[56] *Ibid.*
[57] *Ibid.*, 65-66.
[58] *Ibid.*, 70.
[59] *Ibid.*, 71.
[60] *Ibid.*
[61] *Ibid.*

privation of Being, which gives us a circular definition. Being is divided dichotomously into spiritual being and corporeal being; spiritual being into uncreated (God) and created, spiritual being. God is thus defined as a fraction of a fraction of a general notion signifying Nothing! Nay, it is worse than that:

> If the notion of spirit is but a distinction in the universal notion of Being, matter, the other distinction or second species of the same genus, participates in the nature of their common principle, which comprehends them both. Matter and spirit, confounded at their source, are therefore the same at bottom! . . . Do you not perceive [cries Bautain] at the end of all these distinctions and all this confusion a gross pantheism, and the fatalism of the ancients with all its consequences![62]

Christian philosophy had become pantheistic! It was but natural that when this dreadful suspicion came over Bautain's mind, he should proceed to attack Scholasticism with a virulence and a crusading zeal that made him a host of enemies.[63] Indeed, the situation was alarming enough, as Bautain conceived it! Here was German Romanticism creeping into the veins of the French nation like a virus, and sapping its moral stamina. The natural protector of morality was the Christian Church; yet when one called on Christianity to combat the disease of Romanticism, one discovered that Christian philosophy was vitiated by an even deadlier disease! Yes, even deadlier; for German Romanticism at least trusted the higher intuitions of the soul, and so arrived at a vitalistic, spiritualistic type of pantheism, while Catholic Scholasticism, believing the reason to be the highest human faculty, deified the universe of mathematical space and time,[64] and arrived at a kind of Spinozistic pantheism. Small wonder then, that the Scholastic arguments for the existence of God made no impression on a Romanticist. They represented a kind of rationalistic dogmatism, a kind of naturalistic pantheism, which he himself had outgrown.

[62] *Phil. Chr.*, II, 73-74.

[63] One can hardly blame Raess and Liebermann for resenting the implication that the instruction at the *Grand Séminaire* was tainted with Pantheism. The type of Scholasticism for which they stood was very different from the Scholasticism of the *Philosophie de Lyon* —much less influenced by Cartesianism, and much nearer to authentic mediaeval Scholasticism.

[64] Bautain points out that the *Philosophie de Lyon (Metaphys. gen.*, article 3) actually lays down the proposition that "space is the divine immensity."

How did Christian philosophy ever come to be infected with such a disease? That, to a man like Bautain, trained in the history of philosophy, was a question of great interest and importance. De Bonald and de Maistre argued that all the errors of modern philosophy were the inevitable consequence of the attempt of Descartes to philosophize *dans un poêle*, as an isolated individual mind, artificially severed from society and tradition. Bautain, too, felt that many of the defects of French Scholasticism could be traced to the influence of Descartes. The pantheism of the *Philosophie de Lyon* was derived from Descartes as logically as the pantheism of Spinoza.

But Bautain was not content to stop there; for he considered that the root of pantheism was rationalism, and Christian philosophy had become rationalistic long before Descartes. The great mediaeval Scholastics were themselves deeply imbued with rationalism; it is to them that the attempt to find God through Nature, and prove his existence by purely rational arguments, is to be traced. Where did they get their rationalism? Surely from some pagan source; for rationalism is foreign to the genius of Christianity. Bautain claims to be able to show the exact moment at which the paganization of Christian thought took place. It was the moment when, under the double influence of the teaching of Abelard and the recovery of the works of Aristotle, "dialectic came gliding into the bosom of Christianity and into her schools." Never was there such a transformation in Christian thinking in so brief a space of time. Logic and dialectics, hitherto despised, became a veritable craze; nothing could be accomplished without the use of the syllogism. Aristotle's philosophy, censured by the early Fathers of the Church, became the object of "a sort of idolatry"; and, in spite of the opposition of Pope Gregory IX, matters had soon reached such a pass that "one was even expected to accept with deference every part of it, every proposition, every word. Every mind was to bow before the word of the Master—and yet," observes Bautain, "not to mention the rest, what has become of Aristotle's physics to-day?"[65]

The pernicious influence of Aristotle! That, to Bautain, is the source of all the troubles that have beset Christian thought from

[65] *Phil. Chr.*, II, 11.

that day to this. If only it could have been nipped in the bud! If only Pope Gregory IX, and the *doctores biblici, positivi, veteres* who supported him in his attack upon Aristotelianism had prevailed over the *doctores sententiarii et novi!* But since they did not prevail, since the serpent of pagan rationalism was suffered to glide into the bosom of Christianity, a great reform is now necessary; and now, strangely enough, the reformer finds that the rôles have shifted, and Christian conservatism itself is on the side of paganism!

> What was new then, what was expressly disapproved by the sovereign Pontiff in those days, has since that time so won its way in the ecclesiastical schools that even to-day the argumentative method is regarded as essential in the teaching of theology, and, in the opinion of many, it almost participates in the sacredness of dogma. It is the positive method which in our days would be declared an innovation; and what was ancient, and respected as such, in the twelfth century would seem a novelty and perhaps be rejected in the nineteenth.[66]

Precisely what was the nature of the great reform which Bautain hoped to accomplish? What was the "positive" tradition to which he here appeals, and which he contrasts with the "dialectical" tradition of the Schoolmen? It must be confessed that Bautain's program is a bit vague. Sometimes he seems to be appealing, like the Traditionalists, from reason to authority; sometimes he explicitly appeals from the Aristotelian tradition to the Platonic, from Abelard and St. Thomas to St. Bonaventura, St. Bernard, St. Augustine, and the Alexandrian Fathers; sometimes he seems to be contending that there is a radical inconsistency between the Hebrew-Christian view of God and the world and the Greek view of God and the world,[67] so that even Platonism is an inadequate vehicle for Christian thought. At such moments the Protestant reader of Bautain is strongly reminded of Ritschl and Harnack, and their attempt to purge Christian theology completely of the pernicious influence of Greek metaphysics. Here, where he is in a sense most reactionary, most unprogressive, most anti-philosophical, is the point where Bautain most nearly approaches the position of certain Catholic "Modernists" like the Abbé Laberthonnière. It is by going "back to" something—"back to Paul," "back to

[66] *Phil. Chr.*, II, 12, note.

[67] See *infra*, section II of this chapter.

Christ"—that most revolutionary movements begin. There are the seeds of a new Reformation in Bautain's criticism of Scholasticism.

5. *Critique of Traditionalism.*

The question of Bautain's relation to the Traditionalists has repeatedly faced us in the course of our study. In our examination of Bautain's theory of knowledge, we have frequently been tempted to deny that there is any real kinship between his doctrine and that of the Traditionalists; and yet we have been forced to admit that the points of agreement are too numerous and too patent to be overlooked. It is time now to pronounce a final judgment on this question; and we shall find that Bautain himself is our best witness. If we examine his attitude toward the philosophy of Lamennais, we shall find him defining his relation to the whole Traditionalist movement with perfect clarity.

The readers of Bautain's first public manifesto as *chef d'école*[68] must have been surprised at the vigor with which he attacked Lamennais. His attack upon the school of Condillac, upon the Scotch school and the Eclectics, and even his attack upon the Scholastics, were quite in the spirit of Lamennais. The Traditionalists were in fact the chief rivals of the Scholastics in France at this time; and if they had not yet attacked Scholasticism as violently as Bautain attacked it, that was only because they had not perceived how rationalistic it was. Had Lamennais suspected that the same Cartesian rationalism which he described as the root of all the errors of modern philosophy was characteristic of the philosophy which was taught in the Catholic seminaries, he would have raised a shout, and called out all his Traditionalist cohorts. Yet no sooner had Bautain finished with his bitter arraignment of Scholasticism than he turned savagely upon Lamennais and condemned his philosophy on the following counts:

1. It is not philosophical.

It has no principle of knowledge in it, and it takes away all means of acquiring one, since, incessantly interposing a human authority between man and the facts, it shuts him off from access to them.

[68] *De l'enseignement de la philosophie en France au XIXme Siècle. Ens. Phil. F.*

It destroys the possibility of immediate certainty *(évidence)*, since general testimony . . . can lead us to *believe*, but can in no case make us *see*. Well, what is knowledge without *évidence*.

It degrades the human intelligence, made to contemplate the truth. . . . Imposing . . . testimony as infallible, as a supreme authority from which there is no appeal, . . . it attacks the most noble prerogative of man, his liberty, by which he has the power to grant or refuse his assent to that which is set before him.[69]

2. It is not Catholic.

It tends to substitute for the only infallible authority, which is that of God, a human authority, that of common sense or the general reason. . . . The martyrs who, however numerous they were, were still in the minority in the midst of the mass of the pagans, were only fools, then![70]

3. As an apologetic, it has no appeal for the modern man.

It found little sympathy among men of our age, who wish *évidence* and not authority, who wish to see the truth for themselves and not receive it on the testimony of another. They have not considered it possible to philosophize by proxy, or that common sense absolved one from the need of knowledge, or that everybody's reason was entrusted with the task of thinking for each. It was in the ecclesiastical schools that it produced the greatest effect.[71]

After this sweeping criticism of the man who was then recognized as the chief of the Traditionalist school, Bautain adds a casual note[72] in which he mentions the names of certain philosophers in whose teachings he finds less to criticize, and with whom, one infers, he is in substantial agreement: de Maistre, de Bonald, Ballanche, Azaïs, and Riambourg—all Traditionalists![73] This note must have puzzled many of his readers: how could he be so much opposed to Lamennais, and still find himself in essential agreement with the Traditionalist school? No one could place Bautain. The opponents of Traditionalism classed him as a

[69] *Ens. Phil. F*, lvii-lviii.
[70] *Ibid.*, lviii, lx.
[71] *Ibid.*, lxi-lxii.
[72] *Ibid.*, lxiii.
[73] With the possible exception of Azaïs, who had a somewhat original "philosophy of compensation," but who was nevertheless one in spirit with the émigré philosophers who founded the Traditionalist school. Riambourg, an out-and-out Bonaldian, was a personal friend of Bautain's. See FB,K, for some of their letters.

Traditionalist, while the Traditionalists themselves became his vehement opponents. Bautain himself seems to have felt that an explanation of his position was imperative; and so, in a long letter to the *Revue Européenne*,[74] he endeavored to clear the whole matter up.

In this letter, Bautain repeats his previous objections to Lamennais's philosophy, with many amplifications; but with all this we have no concern. It ought to be sufficiently plain to the reader, by now, why it was that Bautain reacted so violently against the philosophy of "common consent." To an intuitionist, a second-hand assurance of truth is no assurance at all. We are interested not in the points at which Bautain differs from Lamennais, but the points at which he agrees with him; and here he is very explicit. He lays down three clear-cut propositions, which sum up not only all that he has in common with Lamennais, but, incidentally, all that he has in common with Traditionalism:

(1). That the human reason cannot rise by its own strength to the knowledge of the First Principle, or to that of any fundamental truths. Principles are not "things of reason," entities, abstractions.

(2). That it cannot develop, as reason, without the *datum* of language, which is necessarily traditional.

(3). That reason cannot act without principles and axioms which it does not create, which it cannot verify, and which nevertheless it is obliged to admit, under penalty of rendering itself null and void.[75]

All three of these propositions are expanded and discussed at length. We need not dwell upon the first and third, for we are familiar with Bautain's doctrine that faith and intelligence necessarily precede reason, and furnish it with all its major premises. The second demands sharper attention. The Bonaldian theory of language is the most characteristic doctrine of the Traditionalist school; and Bautain's attitude toward this doctrine will reveal, like a touchstone, his whole attitude toward Traditionalism. I quote at some length, that I may neither conceal Bautain's fundamental agreement with his contemporaries in a belief now generally regarded as bizarre, nor conceal the originality of his interpretation of it.

[74] *Lettre sur le sens commun*, *Rev. Eur.*, VI, 637-673.

[75] *Ibid.*, 649.

Reason [he says] cannot develop spontaneously and, as it were, by its own effort. One thinks only by means of speech and words, with the aid of language; and the formation of a language presupposes the most subtle exercise of thought. This circle is found in every question of origin, and can be avoided only by the intervention of a superior power. . . . Neither man in general, nor a people, nor an individual, has ever had the initiative in his development, nor has he ever become what he wanted to become: or, to put it differently, it was never his will which made the plan of his education or determined his original direction. The human race at its origin was under the immediate control of Providence, and received in its primitive relationship with its divine Author and with its creation all the *idées mères*, all the truths which were destined to serve as principles for its future science, and at the same time as motives for the will.[76] When it swerved from this relationship, it was because it heard and lent an ear to *another* word, a word of negation, of criticism, of reflection, a lying word. In the one case as in the other, it did nothing but react and respond freely to what had been said. . . .

What is true of humanity is true of each people, and here the truth is yet more evident. A people does not appear suddenly on the surface of the earth, like a swarm of insects after a thunderstorm. There is no nation or people that has not its antecedents. It is either the development of a family, or a fraction of an existing nation which moves elsewhere, or, finally, an agglomeration of fragments of population which accumulate and form as it were an alluvial society. In all these forms, there is a language, if not several; in a language, there are traditions of which it is the container; there are ideas, scraps of knowledge, customs; and all this comes from the mother-society. . . . To imagine that peoples or nations constitute themselves by agreement, by deliberation, by social contract; to ascribe to them, in the state which people have pleased to call the state of nature, the reasonings, the systems, the combinations and abstractions of certain thinkers of modern times, is truly to feed upon chimeras; it is to invent society instead of studying it. A people, by the very fact that it is a people, comes from somewhere and from some one; it bears in its moral and intellectual constitution, and in its language, which is the expression thereof, all the principles and all the essential conditions of its future.

Let these observations now be applied to the individual who is born and develops in the environment of an already developed society. His

[76] Cf. Durkheim on the social origin of the logical categories. The Traditionalists and the modern sociological school both trace many of our fundamental moral and metaphysical concepts to "collective representations" which have come down to us from primitive man. The Traditionalists say they were dictated by Deity; the sociologists say they were deduced from the structure of society. For the Traditionalists, the primitive origin of an idea accredits its truth; for most modern thinkers, quite the reverse.

spirit is immersed in the spiritual atmosphere of this society, as his body lives and moves in the environing air. Just as all the forces, all the fluids which stir in the air, press upon, stimulate, penetrate his organs and become modified, so the moral influences, of which the social atmosphere is full, excite and develop his spiritual faculties by means of speech and language, which is for the life of the spirit what the air is for the body—the bearer of light; . . . and the development of his spirit, like that of his body, goes on at first quite unconsciously, as a composite resultant of the antecedents from which he springs and the circumstances in which he is placed. That is the destiny, the *fatum*, to which each man who is born into the world of time is exposed; and it is out of that fatality, the consequence of an original unlawful act of humanity, that his liberty must extricate itself. . . . It is to the society in the midst of which he is formed that man owes all the basal truths that he knows; they are given to him in the germ in infancy, enclosed in the shell of words, like seeds cast into the soil, which germinate only after a long time. . . . We say then, with the author of the *Essay* [Lamennais] that the individual reason is nothing except in relation to the general reason of society, to which it clings as a child to its mother. We say that the reason cannot exist as reason except by means of language, which furnishes it the necessary means for its exercise, and which, in giving it words, transmits to it the types of the objects which the names represent. That is what produces what may be called the *spontaneous education* of man, the primitive and indestructible basis on which all his beliefs are founded. And so we regard as empty hypotheses those attempts at *methodical doubt*, those suppositions of entire ignorance, of a *tabula rasa*, of an empty understanding, which modern reason has delighted in making from Descartes to Condillac, and which they continue to make even to-day in the schools, under another form, when they attempt to demonstrate to a supposed unbeliever . . . by rational arguments the existence of God, of the soul, etc.[77]

The reader will notice, I hope, that in the very act of accepting much that was common to all the Traditionalists, Bautain has assimilated it to his own most fundamental conceptions. The formula of *life*—external stimulus awakening internal response—dominates the whole. Tradition does not impose itself upon the individual's mind as upon a lifeless, putty-like mass; it is the atmosphere in which the individual mind grows, freely selecting from that which is offered—to its own destruction, if it selects badly. Language is but the "container" of tradition, the "expression" of the "moral and intellectual constitution" of a given

[77] *Rev. Eur.*, VI, 642-646.

society; it is a short-hand expression for the total pressure of society upon the individual. We are far removed from the mechanical theory of de Bonald.

To conclude, then, Bautain agrees with the Traditionalists in their negations, but not in their affirmations. He agrees with them in their anti-intellectualism, but he proposes a different substitute for rationalism: not blind acceptance of social and ecclesiastical authority, but "intelligence," "faith," and the "test of works." He insists upon the importance of "authority" as strongly as they—"for the child, it is his parents' authority; for the disciple, his master's; for the outer man and the truths which bear upon his self-preservation, that of society";[78] and, we may add, in religious matters, that of the Divine Word of which the Church is the custodian—but its importance is temporary, and merely pedagogical. Without hearkening to some word of authority, no knowledge; yet hearsay knowledge, even in the religious sphere, is not the final or the highest type of knowledge. Faith leads to sight at last.

If there is one member of the Traditionalist school with whom Bautain has more in common than with all the others, it is de Maistre. We saw in our Introduction how strong is the mystic and intuitionistic strain in de Maistre's thought. Much that is central in Bautain's theory of knowledge—his theory of innate ideas, for example—may have been derived directly from de Maistre. If his theory is broader and more philosophical than that of the haughty *émigré*, that is due to his deeper knowledge of the history of philosophy, and his contact with German Catholic thought.

One thing more is really needed to complete our picture of Bautain's relations with contemporary schools of thought: an account of his relations with contemporary German Catholic thought, as represented by the school of Munich, the school of Tübingen, the school of Bonn, etc. Here, however, we are practically reduced to conjecture. Bautain hardly mentions his German Catholic contemporaries at all; although we know that, through Mlle. Humann, he was profoundly influenced by them. He is opposed, as a matter of course, to the rationalism of Hermes and the school of Bonn; he thinks Franz Baader "sincerely Christian at heart,"

[78] *Rev. Eur.*, VI, 650.

but too much taken with the ideas of Saint-Martin and Jacob Boehme;[79] he has pleasant relations with the school of Tübingen, and gets a long and, on the whole, commendatory letter from Moehler himself, discussing the *Philosophie du Christianisme*. That is about all we know definitely; and yet it is possible to define Bautain's position in relation to these schools of thought with considerable assurance. He stands closest, I think, to the school of Munich, where Romanticism was most completely regnant; and yet, while he is more of a Romanticist than most of his Catholic contemporaries, he has a horror of Romantic pantheism that sets him off from Baader and all the school of Munich. Baader aims to reconcile theism and pantheism; Bautain tries to purge Christian theology of every vestige and suspicion of pantheism. As his French compatriots noted in Bautain a certain exotic flavor of German Romanticism, so his German contemporaries noted in him a certain French *intransigeance*, which caused them to set him down as a reactionary and an obscurantist.[80] We may say, in sum, that so far as contemporary influences are concerned, Bautain's philosophy was a mixture of French Traditionalism with the Romanticism of the school of Munich. If this formula is insufficient to express the richness of his thought, it is partly because it leaves out of consideration his individual religious experience and philosophical genius, and partly because it neglects the influence of the classical philosophers.

## II

### Bautain as an Eclectic: His Philosophy of the History of Thought

We have seen how Bautain pokes fun at his former associates, the Eclectics, for trying, in their eagerness to find truth in everything, to make essentially irreconcilable views mix and fuse in

[79] Cf. *supra*, chapter I, note 30.

[80] When Bautain's first essays came out, one of his French critics (*Ami de la Religion*, LXXV, 517) accused him of writing in a barbarous and incomprehensible style: "The author speaks of the *great categorical imperative*; a German would perhaps understand that, but it will be an enigma for most of his readers." If so familiar an allusion was an enigma, one hardly wonders that Bautain was misunderstood! On the impression which Bautain created in Germany, see *Vermeil, op. cit.*, 115-117.

their philosophical melting-pot. To a man of his iconoclastic temper, bent on purifying the faith from all admixtures of error, the view that every philosophy and every epoch in the history of thought represents a step forward toward the truth could not but be obnoxious. To him, there are certain philosophies which it is our business not to appreciate but to reject and combat with all the force there is in us; and there are certain periods in the history of thought when men, instead of progressing toward the truth, have wandered so far astray that it is best for us to leap over the whole period, and go back to the point of divagation, if we are to escape their errors.

Nevertheless, there was always a good deal of the Eclectic in Bautain. His knowledge of the historic philosophers, acquired before his conversion, could hardly be obliterated; and the Eclectic habit of entering sympathetically into diverse points of view, and assimilating as much of each as one consistently could, was almost second nature to him. The iconoclastic mood was not always upon him; his mission was not merely to purify Christian philosophy, but to restate it in modern terms, and reconcile it as far as he honorably could with the prevailing philosophical tendencies, as St. Thomas had done in his day. To attempt to do this, was to use the Eclectic method; and Bautain was conscious of the fact. Given a criterion of selection, he says, the Eclectic method is excellent, and Christian apologists have always used it.

> In this sense and in this manner, Christianity is essentially eclectic. The word of Jesus Christ is sown as a seed in the world; it germinates there, develops, blossoms, and bears fruit in a marvellous fashion in the midst of pagan civilization and all the philosophical knowledge of the time. The Church is founded in this environment; . . . and, in the discussion of the doctrines she meets upon her path, she accepts all that is not contradictory to her, and gathers in all the elements which can be reconciled with the truth which she proclaims. Whoever is not against us is for us. There is nothing in this thought of Plato which is contrary to the revealed word; the Church adopts it. This maxim of Aristotle has nothing in it contrary to dogma; the Church makes it her own. This precept of Stoicism is in harmony with or not in opposition to discipline; the Church appropriates it. That is how Christianity practices eclecticism.[81]

[81] *Mor. Ev. D*, 317-318.

We must not be surprised, then, to find Bautain writing a sort of philosophy of the history of thought and representing his own philosophy as the culminating stage in a process of gradual approximation to the truth—quite like Hegel or Cousin. Philosophies of the history of thought were in style just then. To the Encyclopedists of the eighteenth century, it seemed that the history of thought could be safely neglected; one could apprehend Truth best by keeping one's Reason free from the contamination of the superstitions of the past, and seeing things for oneself. To the philosophers of the early nineteenth century—radicals and conservatives both—this appeared to be a great error. We do not best approach the truth by pretending that we are the first investigators who ever lived; we need to study the traditions of the past, either, as Comte would say, to free ourselves from their errors, or, as the Traditionalists would say, to appreciate their divine wisdom, or, as Hegel and the Eclectics would say, to appreciate their relative truth and so climb upon the shoulders of our predecessors. It was customary, then, for all philosophers to get a running start of at least a millennium or two before propounding the truth which was to set the capstone upon the philosophical structure of the ages. Bautain is no exception.

There are to be found in Bautain's writings two distinct and not wholly harmonious philosophies of the history of thought. One of these, entitled *True and False Philosophy*,[82] is written in his sternest, most uncompromising mood, and painted in black and white, like St. Augustine's "City of God." The other,[83] which represents a later and maturer view, is far more conciliatory, and makes a place for all types of philosophy, even rationalism, on a graduated scale. Bautain the Traditionalist, the reformer, the opponent of Pantheism and Rationalism speaks in the former; Bautain the Romanticist, the Eclectic, the apologist speaks in the latter.

Two great tendencies—so begins the essay on *True and False Philosophy*—have been struggling with each other since the beginning of human thought: rationalism and traditionalism, sophis-

[82] *Rev. Eur.*, V, 635 *et seq.*; VI, 524 *et seq.*; reprinted in *Phil. Chr.*, letters 23-26. Cf. *Choses*, 113-120.

[83] *Psych. Exp.*, I, 16 *et seq.*; cf. *Mor. Ev. P, passim.*

tic and true philosophy. Both claim to spring from the love of wisdom; but the only type of wisdom which rationalism considers possible is such as the unaided human individual can acquire by rational reflection upon his own experience; while traditionalism affirms the existence of a higher Wisdom—the heavenly Wisdom whose praises are sung in the book of Proverbs—vouchsafed to favored individuals, conditioned upon purity of heart, and embodied in the sacred traditions of the race. So far as European civilization is concerned, the chief source of rationalism is Hellenic; of traditionalism, Hebraic.

The Hebrew type of wisdom is not speculative and argumentative, like that of the Greeks, but essentially practical and intuitive. The Hebrew sage, as Bautain points out, was not a "philosopher" at all; he was either a seer or else a scribe, meditating upon the writings which seers had left behind.

> And so [says Bautain] to prove his knowledge and his orthodoxy the Israelite did not resort to reasoned demonstration, to disputation. He cited the text, saying: "It is written." He recounted facts in their natural or geneological order.[84]

In other words, the only kind of philosophy known to the Hebrews, is a sort of philosophy of history. When a Hebrew seeks to inspire faith in his God, he does not argue, he recounts the history of his people. In the New Testament, as in the Old, *events* are the only arguments by which the belief in Providence is sustained; the missionary sermons of Peter, Stephen, and Paul are nothing but panoramas of sacred history, "recounted without commentary, without discussion, without demonstration, with no other proof than the exposition of the acts of Providence and the natural course of events itself." The Hebrew mind apprehends the divine in seeking to discern the meaning of history, and this apprehension is immediate and intuitive. "Life evidences itself through its activity as light does through its brilliancy." It is precisely because the Hebrew does not reflect and reason that he is able to plumb the mystery of man's origin and destiny. Questions of whence and whither are questions that can never be solved by reasoning.

[84] *Phil. Chr.*, I, 348.

Thought, like the brook, could not ascend again to its source without losing its way. It is not by concentrating himself within himself, by reflecting himself in the mirror of his inward consciousness, that man will recognize his primal Source, for reflection can show him only his momentary state of existence, and not what he was before the present reflection, or what he will be the next moment. It is not with the aid of his memories that he will explain his origin, for no creature was ever present at his own creation, . . . and, once more, no creature is able to see into its own depths; and thus man cannot know himself in himself or by himself.[85]

Bautain maintains, as vigorously as Ritschl and Harnack, that between the Greek genius in general and the genius of Judaism and Christianity, there is unalterable opposition. The Hebrew finds his God intuitively, in human history and the moral life; the Greek finds his God by a process of rational reflection upon the phenomena of Nature. Yet no sooner has he said this, than he proceeds to soften the sharpness of the contrast by pointing out that there is a non-rationalistic strain in Greek philosophy: the Pythagorean strain, which Bautain traces to Egyptian influences, and believes to be derived from primitive revelation. The great and distinguishing doctrine of this Pythagorean school is the necessity of moral preparation for the intuition of religious truth.

Pythagoras [says Bautain] founded the only really serious school of philosophy in the Occident, where conduct went hand in hand with speculation. His disciples had to pass through a long and painful process of testing . . . to free them by degrees from the prestige of the senses, the illusions of the imagination, the prejudices of the reason, and all the opinions and habits which savored of their former manner of life; to purify them, in order to render them capable of receiving . . . the announcement of certain truths unknown to the multitude, and of reaching at last, by illumination of the celestial ray, the contemplation of pure verity. . . . And so there issued from this school a multitude of remarkable men; . . . and even more than a century after the violent destruction of this school, there was not a distinguished man in Greece who did not participate in its spirit. . . . The Socratic school, which appeared long afterward, continued the work begun by Pythagoras, but in a manner less profound, less vigorous, and less pure.[86]

Bautain is surprisingly cool toward Socrates. He complains that

[85] *Ibid.*, 340.

[86] *Ibid.*, 355-357.

Socrates' teaching was too largely negative and destructive, too dialectical in form, and too flippant in spirit, to be a means of moral betterment. Living in a time when the Greek reason was in the full luxuriance of its development, and intoxicated with the sense of its own powers, Socrates undertook to defend the traditional morality and the higher intuitions of the spirit—a serious task, demanding a serious mind. But Socrates, instead of putting his disciples through the ethical and religious discipline which alone could fit them for the appreciation of truths of this higher order, adopted the logic-chopping methods and the jesting humor of the Sophists themselves, and flippantly discussed the most sacred mysteries in the public squares.

His lessons [says Bautain] were almost *jeux d'esprit*. . . . He often gave instruction to whomsoever he met, without demanding any preparation; and far from imposing silence on beginners, he questioned them endlessly, and provoked them to talk. He did not trouble his disciples much about their conduct, as the example of Alcibiades shows. In his conversations, lofty truths are not announced with befitting gravity; but, proposed under the form of doubts and questions, they are abandoned to the criticism of the reason and the discussions of dialectic. . . . It is a polemic which always begins with a negation; it is the rational or argumentative method which thinks it cannot solidly establish the truth except by first destroying all that could be said to contest it or deny it. He brought Science out of the temples to exhibit her in the public square; he prostituted the Word of Wisdom to every man's reason and imagination, . . . making a game of the most serious thing in the world, and casting into the gusts of a vain polemic the profound ideas which he had gained in the temples, and the high inspirations which he had received in solemn moments of ecstasy.[87]

Plato and Aristotle represent respectively the Pythagorean and Sophistic strains in the Socratic school. With Plato, Greek philosophy reaches its apogee: "all that the Greek genius can produce of grace and high nobility."[88] For Bautain, as for Emerson, the image of the twice-divided line is the epitome of all true philosophy. The superiority of intuitive knowledge to reasoned knowledge and to sense perception; the unreality of sensible objects by comparison with ideas and ideals; the need of moral discipline and aspiration

[87] *Phil. Chr.*, I, 358-359. [88] *Ibid.*, 360.

as a preparation for the contemplation of the superior realms of truth: all this is Gospel to Bautain. Plato, he admits, has "more light than warmth and affection"; in his philosophy, "truth was rather contemplated and admired by the intelligence than received in the heart, tested, and practised"; still, Plato is to Pythagoras what fulfilment is to presentiment.

Aristotle, on the contrary, is the prince of rationalism, the Past Grand Master of Sophistic. His system is a dull drab travesty of Plato's, where the Platonic ideas, reduced to the level of rational entities, lifeless and unsubstantial, give a semblance of objectivity to a purely subjective and artificial *schema*. Whatever truth it contains it owes to its intuitive presuppositions; and yet "it does not know enough to lift its glance to that which dominates it," and fails to recognize the existence of the realm of ideal truth from which it gets its premises.

> A few formulas, a few definitions, a few axioms on one side; a few facts and a few observations, with plenty of distinctions, on the other; and in between these postulates and their data, the reason with its great instrument, with its tri-square and its syllogistic form: that is all he needs, not only to ascertain the truth of science, but to construct it or create it, to form a system of thoughts and words, to which all truths as well as all realities must accommodate themselves.[89]

The inevitable outcome of Aristotelianism is the clipping of the wings of genius, the stifling of the noblest intuitions of the heart, and the shrinking of the horizon of the universe to the limits set by the dull sensual vision of the average man. "Or else," adds Bautain, "it finds its outcome in a Critical Philosophy, whose last word is that man knows nothing and can know nothing; and which leaves him, together with universal doubt, naught but distaste for science and despair!"[90] Such was in fact the final outcome of ancient philosophy.

It was into a jaded and disillusioned world that the envoys of Christianity came preaching a wisdom above the wisdom of man; and the world, convinced of the impotence of the unaided human reason to reach metaphysical truth, listened and accepted. "This conviction of impotence," says Bautain, "has always been, and still

[89] *Ibid.*, 361-362.

[90] *Ibid.*, 363.

is, the first psychological requirement for profitably receiving the word of salvation."[91] The Apostles did not try to give rational explanations of their doctrines, so as to accommodate them to the human understanding; they boldly admitted that what was wisdom to them must appear foolishness to the "natural man"—whom Bautain likes to identify with Aristotle's "rational animal." They trusted, in the first place, to the self-evidencing power of the words of light and life which they uttered, and, in the second place, to the convincing power of their practical fruits in transforming their converts and the whole fabric of civilization. Still, they could not long remain without a philosophy; for now, since the appearance of the Divine Word in human and intelligible form, a genuine science of the divine was possible, and demanded to be formulated, for the unification of doctrine as well as for the convincing of unbelievers. So Christian theology was born: Platonic largely in form, since many Christian converts were Platonic philosophers; but drawing its principles and sanctions mainly from the Scriptures.

The Platonic period in Christian thought—the period of Clement of Alexandria, Origen, and St. Augustine—seems to be the hey-day of true philosophy in Bautain's estimation. But an evil day came when certain doctors of the Church—Abelard and Peter Lombard among the first—repeated Socrates' mistake, and "descended into the arena, trying to repel rational arguments with rational arguments."[92] Thus was born Scholasticism.

> As soon as reasoning was appealed to as a means of ascertaining metaphysical truth, the school of Aristotle might be expected to reappear: it was in fact resuscitated by a sort of fatal coincidence, both by the diffusion in Europe of the Arab translations and commentaries, and later on by the importation of the original writings. . . . Then arose an unprecedented infatuation for the Stagirite philosopher, and, in the full sense of the word, a sort of idolatry.[93]

None of the Scholastics escapes Bautain's disfavor. The trail of Aristotle is over them all. For a few of them, notably St. Thomas, he professes a certain admiration; they were "men of rare intelligence," he admits, and they "often took a bold leap,

[91] *Phil. Chr.*, II, 4. [92] *Ibid.*, 10. [93] *Ibid.*, 10-11.

sustained as they were on the wings of faith"; nevertheless, he adds, "the logical equipage with which they were obliged to load themselves soon brought them to earth, and they were forced to drag themselves painfully along through the science of syllogistic, in order to arrive at the presentation of the relation of one truth to another under the form of a rational conclusion."[94] Such a method could not reign forever. It soon became evident that reason could get out of the Scriptures and the Sentences whatever it chose to put in; and the disgust and uncertainty which followed upon this discovery led to a violent reaction against Scholasticism, and to the birth of Modern Philosophy.

> Here [says Bautain] occurred a new revolution in the realm of thought and science. So long as the old scholasticism reigned, philosophy and theology remained united. They both rested upon the revealed word, to which they appealed in the last resort, whether to establish the major premises of their arguments, or to confirm their conclusions. The first principles were saved; they subsisted in the midst of the impudent riot of reason, still maintained by the authority of the Church. But when reason, fortified by practice, had perceived that she was mistress of the discussion, she tried to set herself in the place of that authority.[95]

And so, carefully circumscribing the territory of philosophy, and separating it entirely from that of theology, Reason proclaimed her independence of faith. She constituted herself "judge without appeal, Sovereign Reason"[96] within her chosen sphere, and sought her premises either "in herself" (Descartes) or "in the exterior world" (Bacon). This divorce between theology and philosophy, faith and reason, was one of the most dreadful calamities that ever overtook the world. "The greatest misfortune of our century," says Bautain, "is that it lacks religious faith; and it lacks it, because faith and science have been separated, because they have been declared incompatible, if not contrary."[97]

Bautain is much severer in his judgment of Descartes than in his judgment of Bacon. To be sure, he shares the general Continental prejudice against Anglo-Saxon utilitarianism; but he admits the value of natural science, and freely grants that, in that sphere, the Baconian method works. "It is beyond all doubt since Bacon,"

[94] *Ibid.*, 13-14. [95] *Ibid.*, 14. [96] *Ibid.*, 15. [97] *Ens. Phil. F*, xii.

he writes, "that the only way to know facts is to observe them; that experimentation and induction are the two great methods of the natural sciences—and one sure thing is that the dialectical method counts for very little in the numerous discoveries made since that time." Natural science is no enemy of theology, in Bautain's mind; the laws of nature are types of the laws of the spiritual world. As for the experimental method, well, it was after all the *experience* of God that Bautain was setting over against the abstract notion of God; mystics and intuitionists are all empiricists, if you permit them to define the field of experience widely enough.

Descartes, on the other hand, was inaugurating a type of philosophy that was really a substitute for theology, for it was a comprehensive world-view based no longer on the syllogistic exposition of truths received from tradition, but on the human reason's analysis of itself. The danger of it was concealed at first, for Descartes unconsciously smuggled in traditional truths like the existence of God in the shape of axioms and first principles; but the Christian philosophers who seized upon Descartes' method as a means of staying up the tottering structure of Scholasticism, have gradually approached the logical outcome of Cartesianism: Spinozism. Their God is simply the empty form of their own understandings, or, if they admit sense data for the reason to work upon, he is the First Cause of Nature. In neither case is he the God of religion, for the moral and religious nature of man finds no place in the Cartesian psychology; and in both cases he is unreal, for the Kantian critique has exposed the subjectivity of the forms of the understanding and the whole world of Nature which they shape.

It would not be fair to leave the impression that Bautain is wholly hostile to Descartes. As an opponent of Aristotelianism and Scholasticism, and as a proponent of the Platonic doctrine of innate ideas, he has Bautain's sympathy. Bautain only regrets that the Platonic tendency in Cartesianism, represented by Malebranche, failed to outstrip the rationalistic tendency which culminated in Spinozistic pantheism and the *Philosophie de Lyon*. Malebranche is, after Plato, Bautain's most admired master. The following remark indicates pretty clearly where their point of contact lies:

To see all in God signified for him [Malebranche] to perceive the truth in the divine ideas, archetypes of the existences and of knowledge, which the intelligence can contemplate by means of a higher light. Those who made sport of this great man in the following century did not even suspect what he meant. They were incapable of understanding the sublime leadings of the Christian philosopher.[98]

In the essay on *True and False Philosophy*, the history of modern philosophy is only vaguely alluded to, not because Bautain is less familiar with modern than with ancient philosophers—on the contrary, he shows far less acquaintance with Aristotle, whom he grossly misunderstands, than with any of the modern philosophers—but because the whole purpose of the essay is to furnish an historical background for his polemic against rationalism in Christian thought. Once the historical antecedents of the *Philosophie de Lyon* have been made clear, this purpose is accomplished, and the epic of Truth and Error closes dramatically with the defenders of the City of God made captive by the hosts of Satan—and no rescuer yet in sight. To relieve the suspense, we may perhaps be permitted to supply the *dénoûment* which Bautain probably had in mind. The hosts of darkness are thrown into sudden confusion by the unexpected defection of one of their ablest men, Immanuel Kant, who pulverizes their mightiest engine of destruction, known as the Reason. Traditionalism and Platonism[99] then come to the rescue, and an Age of Faith is ushered in, amid universal rejoicings.

One might say that Kant did for Bautain what Montaigne did for Pascal:[100] he led him to despair of reaching truth by the path of reason, and so drove him to embrace religious faith as the only alternative to complete skepticism. What part the study of Kant played in driving Bautain into that state of psycho-physical depression from which Mlle. Humann saved him, we do not know; but we do know that the *Variétés philosophiques*, the first original

[98] *Psych. Exp.*, I, 104.

[99] In the *Choses de l'autre monde*, 113-120, the contrast between Traditionalism and Rationalism reappears as the contrast between Platonism and Rationalism.

[100] See the Dialogue with M. Sacy, printed among the Opuscules in all large editions of Pascal's *Pensées*. Pascal, by the way, should certainly be included among those who most influenced Bautain. See Bautain's answers to the Bishop (quoted in the *Avertissement*), where Pascal is constantly cited.

book which Bautain produced after his conversion, deals chiefly with the problems raised by Kant; and we may surmise that he began to regain his intellectual balance when he came to realize that the Kantian critique, while it condemns all merely rationalistic metaphysics to the limbo of subjectivity, has no terrors for the man who believes in the existence of faculties superior to reason. From that time on, he thought of Kant in terms of warm admiration; and he cherished the hope that Kant might do for the whole world what he had done for him.

> The glory of Socrates [writes Bautain] is to have protested, in the name of conscience and in the name of beliefs founded on the moral law and on tradition, against the subtleties of the reason abandoned to itself; and that which in our own day has made illustrious the philosopher of Königsberg—too little known in France, in spite of the appeal made daily to his authority—that which gives him a genuine right to the gratitude of the partisans of the true philosophy, is that, in his *Critique of Pure Reason*, he has demonstrated incontestably the impotence of the reason to solve definitively a single problem of metaphysics.[101]

The epic of *True and False Philosophy*, while it leaves us in no doubt as to what Bautain's chief antipathies and affinities are, fails to define his position with exactitude. It leaves the impression that he disagrees completely with Aristotle, the Scholastics, and all their progeny, and agrees completely with Plato and all his school. Such an impression would be erroneous. When Bautain is in his calmer and more conciliatory mood, he is much more discriminating in his appraisal of the historic philosophies; and it is in this mood that he makes the classification of philosophies which is first sketched in the little essay on *The Ethics of the Gospel Compared with the Ethics of the Philosophers*,[102] and later elaborated in the Introduction to the *Psychologie Expérimentale*, which forms a sort of preface to his whole system of philosophy.

The basis of this classification of the philosophies is that concept of the evolution of life through response to more and more spiritual stimuli which, as we have already seen, is the central idea in

[101] *Phil. Chr.*, I, 173.

[102] *La Morale de l'Evangile comparée à la morale des philosophes.* In the *Morale de l'Evangile comparée aux divers systèmes de Morale*, which forms a vast elaboration of the preceding, the same scheme is used, with certain modifications.

Bautain's philosophy. "Man, when he is born here below," says Bautain, "is already potentially all that he can become, all that he . . . is destined to be in reality in the realm of time. His life on earth is an unfolding of his potentiality, an unfolding of his properties and his faculties, a continual evolution of his interior nature, so that he successively exposes himself outwardly, such as he is inwardly."[103] Now, each faculty of man is called out in its turn by that stimulus in the environment which answers to its need; the external world takes on a different hue at each stage, according to the nature of the stimulus to which man is just then responding. "Hence," says Bautain, "as many philosophical systems as there are distinct elements in man and well-marked steps in his development; as many pretended sciences of man as there are phases or forms in which he presents himself to the observer, and principal faculties which manifest his life."[104] In other words, since man is the microcosm in which the macrocosm is reflected, a defective or one-sided "anthropology" or psychology immediately results in a defective or one-sided metaphysic. Thus all differences in philosophy can be traced to the field of psychology. This psychological classification of the philosophies becomes a philosophy of the history of thought by virtue of the law of recapitulation.

> The law which presides over the development of the human individual during his sojourn on earth is also that which rules over the progress of the species; so that humanity as a whole, nations, and societies, present in the course of their history the same phases and pass through the same periods as the individual; or rather, the individual follows necessarily the law of the race.[105]

The first period in the individual and racial evolution of man is the period of physical development. "At this stage," says Bautain, "he is alive only in so far as he feels physical influences and instinctively reacts toward them; he exercises his taste, his discernment, his natural activity, in the sole interest of the body; he lives only by the body and for the body."[106] Since physical stimuli occupy the whole field of his attention, the philosophy which corresponds to this stage in his development is of course Sensualism in

[103] *Psych. Exp.*, I, 16.
[104] *Mor. Ev. P*, 25.
[105] *Psych. Exp.*, I, 35, note 2.
[106] *Ibid.*, 17.

psychology and Materialism in metaphysics. It is the period of the "lust of the flesh." "The philosophical subject is here man at the first stage of his development, in his infantile state. The object which corresponds to this stage is the terrestrial world and all that relates to the needs of the animal life."[107] Materialism is of course not confined to the infancy of the race; the school of Epicurus has not lacked followers in all ages; materialism appears whenever psychology limits its attention to sense-perception (as in the school of Condillac) and ethics fancies that man's soul can be satisfied when his senses are gratified.

To childhood succeeds youth; to the "lust of the flesh," the "lust of the eye." Adolescence is the period when, through the influence of language and society, man "begins to distinguish himself from objective nature, and distinguish it from himself; and then also," says Bautain, "a new need manifests itself or makes itself felt, a new tendency announces itself: the taste for beauty."[108] The youthful taste for beauty is the first step in man's Platonic initiation. The object which corresponds to this stage in his development is Nature no longer looked upon as a mere source of sensation, but "seen as a spectacle,"[109] full of hints of the higher Beauty that shall later be revealed. Man's natural philosophy at this period is Romanticism, in which Aesthetic values alone guide the imagination, and the beautiful is made the measure of the true and the good. Whenever this occurs, as in the time of the Renaissance, and at the beginning of the nineteenth century,

> you will get brilliant and superficial theories, which draw man into a fantastic world, and keep him in a sphere full of illusions and marvels. . . . Hypotheses take the place of science, and virtue has dignity only in so far as she shows herself under a tragic or romantic form. Hence the egoism of imagination and vanity, when man . . . prostrates himself before the products of his genius or before the work of his hands.[110]

Next comes the critical period of the development of reason, closely associated with the development of the sense of justice, or practical reason. "Reason," says Bautain, "stops the *fougue* of the imagination, tempers its fire and brilliancy. Images, just now

[107] *Psych. Exp.*, I, 18.
[108] *Ibid.*, 19.
[109] *Ibid.*, 20.
[110] *Mor. Ev. P*, 21.

so seductive, lose their color: disenchantment commences; and hardly has man lent an attentive ear to the dictates of reason, before he acquires the consciousness of a new need, more noble and more general than the preceding: the need of order, of justice, or of moral beauty."[111] Man is here on the boundary-line between two worlds and two selves, one phenomenal and empirical, the other transcendental. The reason is the highest empirical faculty; the moral sense is the first hint of man's superior nature, which puts him in touch with a superior world.

> If a man or a people, arrived at the age of reason, still leans toward the inferior nature, the reason will be regarded as the noblest attribute of the human creature, who will be defined as a "reasonable animal." If, on the contrary, one is sufficently extricated from matter to lift one's glance toward the spiritual world, animality will appear as an accidental degradation, and it will be said of man that he is an "*animalized reason.*"[112]

In the former case the result is Aristotelianism; in the latter case, Stoicism. The Aristotelian ethics, according to Bautain, represent a compromise between man's animal and rational nature, whereby extremes of devotion and self-abnegation are as much excluded as extremes of animal passion. "The perfection, the wisdom of man," according to this system, "will consist in obeying at once the laws of animality and those of reason . . . that is to say, he will satisfy the beast as much as he can without disturbing and degrading his reason."[113] Stoicism, on the other hand, tends to "divide man within himself and lift spirit above matter, reason above animality,"[114] for which reason Bautain regards it as the highest possible form of rationalism.

Both Aristotelianism and Stoicism suffer from the original vice of rationalism: subjectivism. Acute self-consciousness is the chief characteristic of the critical period that separates youth from manhood. Thought is no longer inspired by the sight of the external universe, but rather by reflection upon the phenomena of the world within; it becomes abstract instead of pictorial. Man "identifies

[111] *Psych. Exp.*, I, 21.
[112] *Mor. Ev. P*, 34-35.
[113] *Ibid.*, 35-36.
[114] *Ibid.*

the Ego with the non-Ego,"[115] he "makes himself his own object, subject-object,"[116] proclaiming his absolute spontaneity and absolute autonomy in the face of all the facts that proclaim his absolute dependence on external stimulation and guidance. In epistemology, he makes his own reason the measure of possible reality; in ethics, he makes his own individual will and judgment the test of what is right; in politics, he proclaims the sovereignty of the people—which implies the power of human reason "to *found the principle* from which all law, all justice, derive."[117] All this goes to show that we are now in the period of the "pride of life"—as deceptive in its way as the lust of the eye and the lust of the flesh.

Pride goeth before a fall; and dogmatism, when pushed too far, leads to skepticism. The effort to deduce the universe from the constitution of one's own reason, and the effort to found ethics and politics on rational principles laid down by the legislating self, are doomed to failure. A jangling of opinions breaks out, that soon leads to despair. Morals and institutions and the universe itself, all seem to begin to crumble. But skepticism is only a passing phase.

> It breaks down with the rationalism of which it is the final consequence, as soon as man recognizes that Being, the source of good, and the mysterious law promulgated in the conscience do not fall within the sphere of the senses, and thus can no more be demonstrated to the reason than they can be refuted by it. . . . If man denies the truth of Being and the Good, he is no longer skeptical, nor reasonable; he is senseless *(insensé)*; that is to say, void of any sense for things ethical and divine. If he believes in goodness and in the conscience, although conscience and goodness cannot be demonstrated to him, he is no longer either a rationalist or a skeptic: he is a *believer*, in spite of his reason.[118]

Meanwhile, if man's development is not arrested, there have been dawning upon him the first intimations of a higher nature and a higher world. The stage of reason is, in fact, not a stage but a boundary-line. "Reason . . . is not an essential element of the human being at all; it is not even an absolute or necessary property; it is only a temporary modification, a mode of being of the mind. It holds a middle place between the senses and the

[115] *Psych. Exp.*, I, 37. [116] *Ibid.*, 23. [117] *Ibid.*, 39. [118] *Mor. Ev. P*, 42-43.

imagination, which it ought to govern, and the intelligence and will, which it ought to obey."[119] Through the sense of justice which is associated with it, it leads man to suspect the existence of a higher world; it cannot bring him into contact with it. *Love* and *intelligence* are the higher prototypes of which justice and reason are but shadows; they lead man, if he will yield himself to their guidance, above the realm of phenomena into the realm of Truth. First comes "a sort of vague faith in the existence of a superior world . . . in which beauty, truth, and goodness must dwell"; then faith gradually becomes sight, and man has arrived at the "third degree of the Platonic initiation," or the "philosophy of intelligence."[120]

Here the subject lifts his glance above himself and the world, toward the celestial regions in which he seeks his object. That object is eternal Wisdom, manifested in the world of the intelligences; it is the ideals which live in this world and are reflected in the purified human understanding; and the scientific theory of the *idea*, the product of this reflection of the intelligence, constitutes *Idealism, Spiritualism, Pantheism*, in the true sense of this word.[121]

The word "Pantheism" should be sufficient warning to us that Bautain has not yet reached the top of the ladder; for Pantheism, as we have seen, is his *bête noir*. It is worthy of note that he applies the term not only to the Rationalism he detests, but also to the Platonism he admires, and to the post-Kantian Idealism whose relation to Platonism he recognizes[122]—to everything, in sum, which falls short of the supreme philosophy, Christianity.

But in what respect does Platonism fall short of Christianity? Bautain's criticism at this point is much less incisive and much more friendly. "One is often astonished," he remarks, "in reading the works of Plato, and above all those of the neo-Platonists, such as Jamblichus, Plotinus, Proclus, etc., to find in their language so great a resemblance to Christian language."[123] Plato even had a presentiment of the Fall of Man. But neither he nor his followers

[119] *Ibid.*, 43.
[120] *Psych. Exp.*, I, 26.
[121] *Ibid.*
[122] Cf. the following marginal note on a manuscript lecture on Idealism: "Show the relation of modern idealism to the ancient idealism of Pythagoras, Plato, and Neo-Platonism." FB,V3, § 24.
[123] *Psych. Exp.*, I, 43.

seem to have been conscious of man's radical inability to reach perfect knowledge and the perfect virtue which is its condition on his own initiative.

> He recognizes well enough [says Bautain] that man is born blind to the true light, and that he cannot see it unless his interior eye is opened and purified; but he seems to believe that this depends solely upon the will of man, and that he has only to direct his desire toward the Truth to obtain the evidence of it at once. It is not by active purification, or by speculation or intuition; in a word, it is not by his own activity that man can enter into the ways of Wisdom. Wisdom must come to meet him; she must touch him with a ray of her light; she must solicit him and attract him "*par le fond.*"[124]

The beginning of all true philosophy is a sense of imperfection, a sense of the need of exterior aid; in short, "humility of heart." This granted, the way is open for a type of philosophy whose object is "no longer the wisdom of the flesh or the senses, the wisdom of thought or of one's own mind (secular, worldly, temporal, *human* wisdom, in fine), but divine Wisdom, ideal and prototype of all wisdom, universal Beauty, mother and model of all particular beauty, source of all virtues, which, at every step in the spiritual development of man, is always, whether he knows it or ignores it, the object of his love and the end of his seeking."[125] What the Greeks sought under the name of *Sophia*, the Hindus under the name of *Swadah*, the Hebrews under the name of *Chochmah*, the Christian possesses: the divine *Verbum*, presented in the Scriptures and the traditions of the Church, enlightening man fully on those ultimate mysteries of his origin, nature, and destiny, which even Plato barely glimpsed.

Arrived at this high point, we can perceive at once the unity and the diversity of philosophy. In its ideal and true form, "philosophy is one: for it grows out of a single Idea, as the tree grows out of a seed."[126] But in its temporal development, it presents itself in several phases, like the tree; and each of these phases is a partial manifestation of the complete truth, as each phase in the tree's development is a partial realization of all that it is destined to become. And each step in the development of the thinking

[124] *Psych. Exp.*, I, 42.
[125] *Ibid.*, 28.
[126] *Ibid.*, 29.

subject is called out by some new external stimulus: "Thus the action of light upon our eye gives us the consciousness of our faculty of vision; . . . the human word gives us the consciousness of our faculty of conceiving the meaning of the word, of thinking it and judging it,"[127] and unless we open ourselves to the Divine Word, we shall know nothing of things divine. The necessity of external stimulation at each step may be seen from the following schematic representation of the whole process of development, which sums up Bautain's whole philosophy of the history of thought:

Relation
Between sensual man and the sensible world;
Between the imagination of man and the world of images;
Between reasonable man and the rational world, the sphere of thought and opinions.
Then relation
Between moral man and society governed by the moral law;
Between intelligent man and the intelligent world;
Finally, between the soul of man or spiritual man desiring and loving eternal Wisdom, and Wisdom giving Itself to man.[128]

In short, Christianity alone has the complete philosophy, because it alone is the product of the whole of Reality reflected in the whole of the nature of man; all other philosophies are partial philosophies, because the product of part of reality reflected in part of man's nature. Metaphysics and Psychology advance side by side; a limitation in one is a limitation in the other.

Bautain makes only a sketchy application of this scheme to the history of philosophy. Since he admits that all types of philosophy have had their day more than once in the history of thought, it is clear that he does not look upon the whole history of thought as a single process of development from "childhood" to "maturity"—particularly since he considers Mediaeval and Modern Philosophy to be inferior to the philosophy of the first Christian centuries. His view seems to be that the Western world has gone through two great philosophical cycles. The first culminated in the triumph of Christianity, for which Skepticism and Platonism, each in its

[127] *Ibid.*, 30.
[128] *Ibid.*, 29-30. The reader will note that this is an elaboration of Plato's twice-divided line.

fashion, prepared the way; and it ended when the barbarian invasions made it necessary to reëducate the race. The "rationalism" of the Middle Ages should not deceive us; it was not the genuine rationalism of maturity, but a sort of premature, adolescent rationalism. "Like big children," he says, "the men of that time reasoned by imitation and from memory; argued on imaginary questions, for the pleasure of winning a victory over their enemies."[129] Real rationalism did not develop until the Reformation, and found its appropriate habitat among the hard-headed, practical-minded English. France became rationalistic only by forced imitation, contrary to her character and genius. The second great cycle is just about to culminate, thinks Bautain. The criticism of Kant and the Platonism of the Idealists and Eclectics have produced just the right combination of humility and expectancy; if Christian philosophy can be purged of pagan Aristotelianism and adjusted to modern ideas, it may win the world again as it did in the first Christian centuries.

Bautain frequently compares his own period to that of Clement and Origen. A "new Alexander," Napoleon, has arisen out of the anarchy produced by skepticism and rationalism. Then, in the period of renewed liberty that has followed the removal of the conqueror's yoke, reason, repenting of her excesses, has tried to recover herself by taking a more spiritual form in the Eclectic philosophy—as of old, at Alexandria. But doubt pursues her, and the manifold systems of the day compass their mutual destruction. And now, as in the ancient world, Faith begins to make herself heard in the silence that ensues upon the futile strife of systems: Châteaubriand, Walter Scott, Manzoni, Lamartine, Sylvio Pellico. It is no time for argument, for men are sick of arguing. "Make, rather, an appeal to Faith in a spirit of faith, and she will answer you: for Faith is everywhere awake now, and awaits only a stimulating beam of light to develop and vivify all hearts."[130] A note of Apocalyptic expectation pervades the earlier writings of Bautain; the times are fulfilled, and the Age of Faith, whose herald he feels himself to be, is at hand. In his later writings, this gives way to a tone of pessimism. Having failed to embrace

[129] *Mor. Ev. P*, 37.

[130] *Phil. Chr.*, I, xii. The words are Bonnechose's; but the ideas are Bautain's.

Christianity, philosophy is about to revert to materialism, following in the train of the left-wing Hegelians;[131] and so, Sisyphus-like, must begin again at the foot of the hill of knowledge.

We have spoken as if there were a certain inconsistency between Bautain's two philosophies of the history of thought. There is indeed a wide difference of mood and attitude between Bautain the reformer and Bautain the apologist. As reformer, he seems to be making war upon all secular philosophy, and heading straight for obscurantism; as apologist, he seems to look with kindly favor upon pantheism itself, and it lacks but little of being Christian in his eyes. Yet is not this the perpetual problem of the religious thinker? On the one hand, it is his task to discriminate between the native essence of his religion and those foreign admixtures which threaten to obscure and vitiate it. On the other hand, he must make these central truths intelligible to his contemporaries by expressing them in current categories, and taking to himself as much of contemporary thought as he honestly can. These two tasks, apparently conflicting, are really supplementary; both efforts must be pushed to the limit, if either is to be accomplished. Syncretism and provincialism, complete assimilation and complete fossilization, must equally be guarded against, as the history of Reformed Judaism shows. If Bautain failed to commend Christianity adequately to his contemporaries, it was not because he was jealous of certain central truths, which he sought to disengage from all sorts of "pagan" contaminations, but because he did not carry far enough his search for the real "essence" of Christianity. A recent critic[132] has remarked that the Modernist movement in the Catholic Church failed because it was not radical enough. Instead of going back to Paul, as the Reformers did, or to Jesus and the prophets, as modern liberal Protestants are doing, it went back only to—Plotinus. The same is true of Bautain. If at times he seems to feel that there is something deeper in the primitive Hebrew-Christian tradition than can be expressed in terms of Greek philosophy, in the end he is content to be a neo-Platonist.[133]

[131] See *Mor. Ev. D*, 334-335.

[132] F. Heiler, *Wesen des Katholizismus*.

[133] The Abbé Laberthonnière stands out almost alone among the Catholic Modernists as one who clearly perceives the radical incompatibility between the Greek view of God as the timeless, changeless essence of things, and the Hebrew view

Christian neo-Platonism, modified by the influence of Pascal, Malebranche, and Kant; combined with French Traditionalism and German Catholic Romanticism; enriched with concrete data from biology and psychology: such is our final formula for Bautain's philosophy.

## III

## Bautain's Influence upon the Subsequent History of French Catholic Thought

The history of French Catholic philosophy in the nineteenth century falls into three main periods. In the first period, which extends through the year 1840 (the date of Bautain's recantation), the Traditionalist philosophy is dominant. The second period is a period of transition. It may be said to terminate in 1879 with Leo XIII's adoption of Thomism as the official philosophy of the Catholic Church.[134] In it, Traditionalist tendencies still persist, and it takes a series of official decrees, ending with the condemnation of Ubaghs and other Louvain professors in 1866, to crush out the movement finally. In the earlier part of the period, Platonic and Romanticist influences seem to predominate, expressing themselves in the "Ontologist" movement, and in various intuitionistic and voluntaristic tendencies; in the latter part, rationalistic and neo-Scholastic tendencies come rapidly to the fore. In the last period, neo-Scholasticism, fostered by the patronage of Leo XIII, becomes theoretically the only orthodox philosophy; but, under plea of apologetical exigencies, a very vigorous neo-Romanticist movement continues to carry on the intuitionism and voluntarism of the preceding period, until it finally culminates (and is crushed) in the Modernist controversy.

Bautain's philosophy is interesting, not only in itself, but as an epitome of all the conflicting tendencies of the century. In him

of God as the overruling Providence that is guiding the course of history, the "Power not ourselves that makes for righteousness." See his *Réalisme chrétien et idéalisme grec*. Bautain, and most of the Modernists, even though they see a certain contrast between Hebrew "traditionalism" and Greek "rationalism," come back eventually to the Platonic way of looking at things. For an illustration of Bautain's underlying Platonism, see his views on the unreality of time and change, pp. 131-134 *supra*.

[134] Encyclical *Æterni Patris*, Aug. 4, 1879.

the Traditionalist movement ripens and begins to wane; through him the influence of German Romanticism, with its revival of Platonism, begins to be effective in French Catholic circles; in his semi-Aristotelian Vitalism, finally, there is foreshadowed one of the most fruitful tendencies of contemporary neo-Scholasticism. Standing at the confluence of two civilizations, in cosmopolitan Strasbourg, and at the turning-point of the century, he combined into a single system the Traditionalism of the French Catholics and the Romanticism of the German Catholics, and thereby helped to redirect the whole current of French Catholic thought in the latter part of the century. How extensive was his influence, one realizes only when one comes to trace the subterranean channel through which it operated.

I do not refer primarily to his influence upon the dying Traditionalist movement, with which his name is exclusively associated in most people's minds. As we have seen, the central ideas of his philosophy are Platonic and Romanticist, not Bonaldian. His alliance with the school of de Bonald, de Maistre, and Lamennais was hardly more than a strategic alliance, springing from a common hatred of rationalism and all its works. He proved a powerful ally, to be sure; for, with his professional knowledge of the history of philosophy, he was able to trace the rationalistic strain in Catholic thought back beyond Descartes to the great mediaeval Scholastics, and ultimately to Aristotle; and so from that time on, Augustin Bonnetty and other Traditionalists were accustomed to point to the victory of the *doctores sententiarii* over the *doctores biblici* in the eleventh century, when the craze for Aristotelian dialectics swept all before it, as the beginning of the rationalization and "paganization" of Christian philosophy. But if Bautain lent powerful weapons to the Traditionalists, in their attack upon rationalism, he gave no aid or comfort to their obscurantistic tendencies. The rôle of tradition in his theory of knowledge is purely pedagogical: it does not override the intelligence of the individual; it helps to develop it. It was in this modified form that the Traditionalist position was set forth by Ubaghs, Laforêt, and other Louvain professors, who proved to be its last defenders. It is hard to see why this form of Traditionalism should ever have been condemned; it is not at all inconsistent with a sane respect

for the human reason, and all the facts of social psychology are in its favor.

The real successors of Bautain are not, however, to be sought among the Traditionalists; they are to be sought among those who, in the above-mentioned period of transition, were the great adversaries of the Traditionalists: those to whom Ferraz gives the misleading name of "semi-rationalists," but who are better described as intuitionists and voluntarists. The leaders of this group were two men who might fairly be described as unavowed disciples of Bautain: the Abbé Maret and Father Gratry.

Ferraz has traced in some detail the influence of Bautain upon the philosophy of the Abbé Maret. He points out that Maret's *Essai sur le Panthéisme* (1840), the work which first brought him fame, is directly inspired by Bautain's *Essai sur le Panthéisme*, printed as a Supplement to Letter 29 in the *Philosophie du Christianisme*, and by Isidore Goschler's thesis, *Du Panthéisme*, which appeared just a year before Maret's essay. The main contention of this essay is one of Bautain's main contentions: that "reason, separated from revelation and abandoned to itself"[135]—"reason *alone*," in other words—always ultimately leads to pantheism. Again in his *Théodicée chrétienne ou comparaison de la notion chrétienne et de la notion rationaliste de dieu* (1844), Maret takes the position that the human reason is capable of proving the existence of God and the infinity of His perfections "only in case it [the reason] has developed in a Christian *milieu*, and under the influence of external instruction."[136] Ferraz thinks, however, that in his *Philosophie et Religion*, published in 1856, Maret has abandoned his Traditionalism and has come completely over into the camp of the Rationalists. This is a half-truth: Maret has abandoned his Traditionalism—by 1856 it had already become dangerous doctrine, and only a few "bitter-enders" were still holding on—but he has not become a "rationalist," in any sense which would distinguish his philosophy from that of Bautain. He has simply shifted his emphasis from the negative to the positive side of Bautain's teaching, and brought to the fore Bautain's doctrine that man has within him a hierarchy of innate ideas—of which

[135] Ferraz, 364.

[136] Ferraz, 367. See the *préambule* to Maret's book.

the *idée-mère* is the Idea of Being—which, when fully brought to consciousness, give him the faculty of knowing God (and the world of the divine ideals) directly and intuitively. Of this doctrine Ferraz says: "It is rationalism pushed to the point of teaching that intuition of the Being of Beings is possible: in a word, ontologism";[137] and it is because he conceives ontologism to be "completely opposed" to Bonaldian Traditionalism that he supposes Maret to have executed a complete *volte-face* between 1844 and 1856. Now, ontologism *is* completely opposed to Bonaldian Traditionalism, but it is an integral part of Bautainian Traditionalism. It may therefore be boldly affirmed that the Abbé Maret, in his whole philosophical pilgrimage, never moved outside the circle of ideas marked out by Bautain.

The same may be affirmed of Father Gratry—due allowance being made for his real originality, which is to be found not in his philosophical ideas themselves, but in the wealth of poetical imagination with which he developed and illustrated them, and in the humanitarian passion which he breathed into them. He was a poet, a social idealist, and a saint, not a philosopher; and he never would have formed a system if he had not found one ready-made, in the neglected works of Bautain. Perhaps he was unconscious of his plagiarism; in composing his works he was accustomed to rely upon bursts of inspiration, and he was unwilling, like most mystics, to acknowledge that inspirations which *felt* so divine could have any human source. His efforts to throw the public off the trail, however, by altering Bautain's terminology and by attacking traditionalism and fideism in the name of "reason," would suggest a more conscious plagiarism. In his *Souvenirs de jeunesse*, Gratry speaks very bitterly of Bautain; we are always bitter against those whom we know we have wronged. Bautain, on his part, never raised his voice to expose the plagiarism; perhaps he was glad to have his ideas propagated, even under false colors. For the rest, Gratry's philosophy deserves the popularity it achieved; the pupil far outshone the master in brilliancy of style and lucidity of exposition. What is more, he had tact. Bautain always put his

[137] *Ibid.*, 371. "Ontologism" gets its name from the prominence given to the "idea of Being." Its popularity in France is usually traced to the influence of Rosmini and Gioberti; but I believe it should be traced to Bautain instead.

ideas in a form that shocked people's sensibilities and aroused their opposition; when Gratry set forth the same ideas in other words, he was loudly applauded, and elected to the *Académie Française*.

We cannot here go into a detailed comparison of Gratry and Bautain, to prove our point. The reader may convince himself of Gratry's extensive dependence upon Bautain by glancing through Ferraz's lucid and sympathetic exposition of Gratry's philosophy, where many of the parallels between master and disciple are pointed out.[138] We should merely like to clear away one illusion, which Gratry deliberately creates, and to which Ferraz unsuspectingly falls victim: the illusion that, in loudly championing the cause of "reason," and in blaming those who claim that reason cannot prove the existence of God,[139] he is really departing from Bautain's position. Not at all; he is merely changing Bautain's terminology. Whereas Bautain distinguished between two faculties, reason and intelligence, Gratry distinguishes between two types of reasoning, "deduction" and "dialectic," which correspond exactly to Bautain's "synthesis" and "analysis." He agrees perfectly with Bautain in maintaining that *discursive* reason can never prove the existence of God; and if he maintains that "reasoning" can prove it, it is only because he calls *intuition* ("dialectic") a species of reasoning, and works out on this basis an elaborate "dialectical logic," buttressed with formidable mathematical analogies. Bautain had worked out a "logic of the intelligence" along similar lines. This misunderstanding once dispelled, it becomes evident that Gratry was no more of a rationalist than Bautain. If he did not attack the "rationalists," he attacked the "sophists"—and meant the same thing. He was an intuitionist, a mystic—yes, and a voluntarist or semi-pragmatist as well—for it was a fundamental point with him as with Bautain, that "the soul has two wings to lift itself to God, dialectics [Bautain's *intelligence*] and love";[140] and of the two, love is the stronger. The *méthode morale* must be joined to the *méthode dialectique*, if we are to be true metaphysicians. The heart has reasons which the head knows nothing of.

[138] See Ferraz, 373-431; especially 376-377, 406-415.

[139] See Introduction to his *Philosophie. De la connaissance de Dieu*, Paris, 1853. Translated by Alger under the title *Guide to the knowledge of God*, Boston, 1892. Crowned by the Academy.

[140] Ferraz, 406.

Gratry survived Bautain by only five years; but the "Strasbourg philosophy" did not die with him. Its influence continued to be active through the teaching and writing of Léon Ollé-Laprune, a follower of Gratry,[141] professor of philosophy at the *École Normale*. A sane and cautious thinker, he was guilty of none of the extravagancies of Bautain and Gratry; but that he belongs in the same stream of thought is unquestionable. His fundamental thesis has been well stated by his disciple Maurice Blondel:

> Knowledge (even philosophical knowledge) and certitude (even rational certitude) are not ideas of the pure understanding and the pure reason. Belief is an integrant element in knowledge, as knowledge is an integrant element in belief itself; that is to say, the *life of the mind* is always an organic part of the *life of the creature;* that is, philosophy is at one and the same time an affair of the reason and an affair of the soul; that is to say, finally, that thought is no more sufficient for a life, than a life is able to find in itself its own light, strength, and total law. "We must not see nothing but reason in man, and nothing but man in reason."[142]

I add one decisive quotation from Ollé-Laprune himself,[143] given in this same article of Blondel's:

> The true philosopher thinks with his entire soul and also—let us speak bluntly—with his body; he thinks with his whole being. . . . He thinks, by resting upon the ground which upholds him, by remaining in contact with humanity of which he forms a part, in contact with the living and the dead; the thought of others, the thought of the human race, thanks to language and tradition, are present to him and enter into his substance. He thinks, finally, attached to God, the Principle, the Support, the Light and Rule of all thought. . . . That a man should go out on the quest for truth with a mutilated soul, is something I cannot understand.[144]

Since the death of Ollé-Laprune in 1898, the current of thought which we have been tracing has broadened and deepened percepti-

[141] Houtin (*Histoire du Modernisme catholique*, 11) refers to Ollé-Laprune's philosophy as "*une philosophie* . . . renouvelée de Malebranche et de Gratry."

[142] *Revue polit. et litt.*, 4th series, XII, 217.

[143] This is from his remarkable book entitled *De la certitude morale* (9th ed., Paris, 1924); see also his more popular book, *Le prix de la vie* (4th ed., Paris, 1923).

[144] *Revue polit. et litt.*, 4th series, XII, 218.

bly, and in conjunction with many other influences, has helped to initiate several important contemporary movements of thought—notably the Catholic Modernist movement of 1898-1908, and the great anti-intellectualist movement which in English-speaking countries expressed itself in the Pragmatism of James, Schiller, and Dewey, but which was something far more complex and widespread than the term Pragmatism now connotes. In this most recent period, as once before in the days of the "Strasbourg school," we shall find the Bautainian philosophy represented not by isolated thinkers like Ollé-Laprune, passing on the torch in comparative obscurity, but by a whole group of collaborators: the school of the "Philosophy of Action."

The founder of this school was Maurice Blondel, whom we have already cited as an enthusiastic disciple of Ollé-Laprune. His remarkable book, *L'Action: Essai d'une critique de la vie et d'une science de la pratique*, published in 1893, is based squarely on Ollé-Laprune's thesis that the will has primacy over the intellect in matters of metaphysics; but although the thesis was not a new one, the skill with which Blondel worked out his "dialectic of the will" was something new and interesting in the eyes of many professional philosophers, who had hitherto been inclined to dismiss Ollé-Laprune with a shrug of the shoulders. Fouillée, commenting on Blondel's philosophy, whose affinity with his own he early perceived, said that he believed the work of the twentieth century would be the formulation of a philosophy of action which should correct the intellectualistic emphasis of previous centuries. Boutroux, speaking at the Philosophical Congress of 1900, said that he believed a science of action to be as legitimate as a science of knowledge; in the science of action, many things that were rightly excluded from the science of knowledge might properly be considered, and questions of religion, conscience, will, and faith were quite in order. Milhaud, writing in the *Revue philosophique* in 1902, said that he felt Blondel's philosophy of action represented a sort of new positivism, a fourth stage that went beyond Comte's third.[145] Meanwhile, Blondel had become the center of a group

[145] For the early history of the movement, and the attitude toward it of Fouillée, Boutroux, and Milhaud, see the articles by de Sailly cited in the next paragraph.

of liberal Catholic thinkers—among whom the names of Le Roy, Wilbois, Fonsegrive, and the Abbé Laberthonnière deserve particular mention—and his philosophy, in their hands, was constantly penetrating new territory and coming into manifold relations with contemporary science, philosophy, and theology. In the years 1900-1906, its popularity and its influence grew by leaps and bounds. The *Annales de Philosophie Chrétienne*, under the editorship of Laberthonnière, became its avowed organ; the *Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale* printed articles by Blondel, Le Roy, Wilbois, and others, expounding the position of the school; and—crowning stroke—Brunetière, the eminent literary critic, converted to Catholicism late in life, devoted his last years to the defense of religious faith in terms of the Philosophy of Action.

The wide ramifications and ambitious program of the Philosophy of Action at this time of its greatest influence are well indicated in a series of expository articles by B. de Sailly, which appeared in the *Annales de Philosophie Chrétienne* in volumes 151-153 (years 1905-06)—a series of articles which attracted the attention of William James and which are mentioned in the preface to "Pragmatism"[146] along with articles by Blondel and Le Roy, and books by Schiller and Dewey, for the benefit of the reader who may wish to delve more deeply into the pragmatic philosophy. According to de Sailly's first article[147] there are five "elements" in the Philosophy of Action:

1. *A critique of the immediate data of consciousness (données de la conscience);* or, as Le Roy prefers to call it, *a critique of common sense.* Here, the school of the Philosophy of Action makes common cause with Bergson, accepting with enthusiasm the conclusion of his *Données immédiates de la conscience*, that common sense has a tendency to materialize and spatialize reality, so that its data need to be radically corrected before they are fit for use in the building of any ultimate philosophy. Certain members of the school (notably Le Roy) have gone so far in carrying on this line of thought initiated by Bergson that they have come to be regarded as out-and-out Bergsonians; yet it is clear that they

[146] *Pragmatism*, preface, viii.

[147] *Annales de phil. chrét.*, 151:180-195.

are primarily disciples of Blondel, and only accidentally disciples of Bergson.[148]

2. *A critique of science.* Here, the school of the Philosophy of Action makes common cause with Poincaré, Milhaud, Duhem, Vincent—and, one might add, Boutroux—in their contention that scientific theories and concepts are only useful points of view, whose relative "truth" consists simply in their ability to help us solve certain practical problems, and fulfil certain practical purposes. Here again, Le Roy is the chief spokesman of the school. In his articles on *Science et Philosophie* in the *Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale*, vols. 7 and 8 (1899-1900),[149] he states that science does not deal with the "inner life and infinite richness of concrete reality," but with the external forms of things, viewed from various angles, or rather, with the rational symbols of these forms. Every scientific *schema* is undertaken for a certain practical purpose; it is true if it fulfils that purpose. Scientific truth is "the growing success of our conquest of the world." "In a word," concludes Le Roy, "scientific truth resembles moral good: one does not receive it from without, one acts it and makes it *(on la pratique et on la fait)*."[150] To this doctrine de Sailly gives the name of "the new positivism."

3. *A critique of the old epistemology.* Here, the views of the school are best stated in an article of Blondel's in the *Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale* for 1898, on *The Idealistic Illusion.* According to Blondel, the modern dilemma between idealism and realism, subjectivism and objectivism, is the result of a too intellectualistic definition of truth: the correspondence or *adaequatio* of the idea and the object. Blondel would replace the problem of the relation of the idea to the object with the problem of the relation of the idea to the totality of action *(action totale)*. From this point of view, an idea is not an attempted "copy" of anything,

[148] Cf. Leclère, *Pragmatisme, Modernisme, Protestantisme*, 149: *Malgré ses caractères speciaux, cette philosophie* [Le Roy's] *rejoint bien celle de M. Blondel, lui fait suite, et s'offre d'elle-même à favoriser l'apologétique chère aux partisans du dogmatisme moral.* On "moral dogmatism," cf. point 4 in de Sailly's analysis, *infra.*

[149] James mentions these articles also in the preface to "Pragmatism."

[150] *Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale*, 7: 562.

but a "moment, a means, in the development of life, which it illuminates and furthers"; and the truth of an idea consists precisely in its capacity to further life. This is the aspect of his philosophy to which Blondel was accustomed, as early as 1888, to give the name of *pragmatisme*, a name which he later gave up when he became acquainted with the more relativistic pragmatism of James.[151] De Sailly is inclined to think that it would be better to retain the term *pragmatisme* for Blondel's philosophy, and use Schiller's term *humanism* for the philosophy of the Anglo-American pragmatists.

4. *"Moral Dogmatism."* The expression is the Abbé Laberthonnière's. Out of this searching criticism of common sense, science, and the nature of knowledge, there emerges, according to him, not a new skepticism or a universal relativism, but a new dogmatism. The old dogmatism of the intellect, destroyed by Kant, is gone forever—though the Scholastic philosophers in their blindness fail to realize the fact—and we must henceforth agree that absolute reality is not discoverable along the path of reason; but *in action we may attain the Absolute*. In action, in the very process of discovering the best practical attitude to take in such a world as this, we at the same time win a practical certitude concerning the ultimate nature of the universe. In the last analysis, all depends upon an act of will, an act of faith. The man who takes the right practical attitude comes to have the right philosophy; the man who takes the wrong attitude goes astray in all his thinking—and when Laberthonnière defines these determining attitudes more specifically, we are at once aware of the influence of Bautain:[152]

On the one hand, the attitude of those who, lifting themselves up to the rank of an Absolute, consider that everything depends on them with-

[151] On Blondel's use of the term *pragmatisme*, and his reasons for giving it up, see Stebbing's *Pragmatism and French Voluntarism*, Cambridge, 1914, Index, *Blondel*.

[152] I should, in all fairness, state the fact that Laberthonnière, up to the time I interviewed him, had hardly read Bautain at all. He named Boutroux and Maine de Biran as the two philosophers who had most deeply influenced him. The Philosophy of Action is undoubtedly the product of other influences besides Bautain's; but I feel that his influence, though indirect and unrecognized, was fully as important as those which were more consciously recognized.

out their depending on anything; on the other hand, the attitude of those who, recognizing their dependence and their relativity, endeavor to open themselves and issue from themselves to seek higher up the center of their life and of their thought. One might say that the one attitude is faith in self; the other, faith in God.[153]

5. *An "integral apologetic" for the truth of the Catholic faith, based upon the foregoing philosophy.* This apologetic will be found best formulated in Laberthonnière's *Essais de philosophie religieuse.* Its nature may be easily guessed from the account which has just been given of his "Moral Dogmatism."

De Sailly is quite conscious of the antecedents and affinities of the movement he is describing. He considers rightly, I believe, that the true progenitors of the Philosophy of Action in France are Ravaisson, Gratry, and Ollé-Laprune. We need only carry the family tree one step farther back than Gratry to visualize the relation of Bautain to the movement. Maine de Biran, Ravaisson, Boutroux, and Bergson; Bautain, Gratry, Ollé-Laprune: this sums up the double genealogy of the Philosophy of Action. As for the relation of the Philosophy of Action to Anglo-American Pragmatism, de Sailly's account of it is somewhat vitiated by his tendency to regard the Philosophy of Action as the one great movement of the day, in which even such a philosophy as Bergson's appears only as a minor contributing "element." From this perspective, Anglo-American Pragmatism appears to him to be a somewhat paradoxical and insufficiently worked-out form of the Philosophy of Action, marred by *un expédient terre à terre et un assez pauvre empirisme.* Its humanistic, utilitarian, and naturalistic tendencies are of course repugnant to him. It would be a still greater fault of perspective, however, were we to turn about and view the Philosophy of Action as a sort of half-way Pragmatism. Actually, we have in Pragmatism and the Philosophy of Action two closely related but relatively independent trends within a larger, world-wide movement for which we have no name in English, but which is often referred to in French by the term *pragmatisme.* Their true relations will come out clearly, I believe, if we take two of their most eminent representatives, William James and Edouard Le Roy, and compare their positions.

[153] *Réalisme Chrétien et Idéalisme Grec.*, 114-115. Cf. 86-87, 94-95, 147-149, 206-214.

James and Le Roy afford a good test case, for they are in many respects nearer together than any other pair of figures we might choose. James was more influenced by French voluntarism than was any other Anglo-American Pragmatist. He constantly confessed his debt to the voluntarism of Renouvier; like Le Roy, he was much influenced by Bergson; and he was at least *acquainted* with the writings of Blondel and Le Roy, as most of his Pragmatist associates were not. Le Roy, on his part, was much more of a pragmatist than the other members of the school. Berthelot, in his *Romantisme Utilitaire*, the most thorough study of the antecedents and ingredients of the pragmatist movement with which I am acquainted,[154] says that Le Roy is entitled to be called a Pragmatist in the full sense of the word, while neither Blondel nor Bergson is to be rated more than a "semi-pragmatist." It is significant that, as late as 1907, when the other members of the school had ceased to call themselves pragmatists, Le Roy still used the term *pragmatisme* to describe his own philosophy.[155] Both James and Le Roy, moreover, were motivated in their philosophy by the desire to rehabilitate religious faith, and find some legitimate way of escape from scientific positivism and agnosticism. Both proposed *practical helpfulness* as the criterion of truth in the realm of religion, and both went on to contend that this pragmatic test of truth was, after all, the only criterion of truth in every realm.

The difference between them—and between the two schools—begins to appear when we note that James, in his effort to put religious truth on a par with scientific truth, was led to deny that there *was* any such thing as truth in the ordinary sense of the word. The utility of an idea, for him, *constituted* its truth. Le Roy, on the other hand—and here he represents the whole school, from Bautain down to the present day—always considered that the practical consequences of an idea afforded a test of its genuine and, if the word be permitted, its objective truth. Religious truth, to Le Roy, is not merely on a par with scientific truth in the general hurly-burly of relativity; it is a superior order of truth. Common sense, science, and philosophy represent ascending degrees of valid-

[154] See I, 27, 119. On the broader meaning of *pragmatisme* in French, cf. *supra*, chapter III, note 175.

[155] See his *Dogme et Critique*, Paris, 1907, Index, *pragmatisme*.

ity. The truth of each is relative to the practical object which it has in view; yet the validity of science is superior to that of common sense, and that of philosophy to that of science, because the end in view is more inclusive. And even philosophy (whose last word, for Le Roy, is not Bergsonian intuition, but action) is inferior to religion as an ultimate point of view; for all dialectics, even voluntaristic dialectics, approach the Absolute only as a limit. "A St. Vincent of Paul comes nearer than a Spinoza to the depths of veritable reality."[156] Le Roy is quite right when he says, in his *Dogme et Critique*,

> You will please note the difference between the doctrine I defend and contemporary English "pragmatism." The latter, it seems, puts . . . in place of the desire for *truth* a preoccupation with mere *utility*. I propose nothing of the sort. All I say is that the true must be acted and lived as well as thought out; that discernment can operate, here, only by . . . putting things into practice—in brief, by making an effort toward effective realization.[157]

The Philosophy of Action lost its popularity as quickly as it gained it. All the leading figures in the school, especially Laberthonnière and Le Roy, were implicated in the Modernist movement; and the authors of the Encyclical *Pascendi*[158] found the root of all the errors of the Modernists in this "agnostic" philosophy. Almost in the twinkling of an eye, the school of the Philosophy of Action was scattered to the four winds, as the school of Strasbourg had been; and the influence of Bautain was once more on the wane. As the father of Fideism, he was already in ill repute; as a Modernist before the Modernists, he was emphatically to be shunned.

I think we must agree that Bautain was one of the grandparents of French Catholic Modernism; yet before we praise or blame him too extravagantly for that, we should be clear in our minds as to precisely what his relation to Modernism is. Modernism was a very complex movement, consisting of at least three distinct and

[156] See the end of the last article on *Science et Philosophie, Rev. de Mét. et de Mor.*, VIII, 71.

[157] *Op. cit.*, 331-332.

[158] See *The Programme of Modernism*, N. Y., 1908, translated by Tyrrell. Cf. the Encyclical's account of this philosophy, 154-180, with the Modernists' reply, 93-110.

independent tendencies: radical Biblical and historical criticism, represented by Loisy and Duchesne; a radical social movement, led by Marc Sangnier, who sought to ally the Church with modern humanitarianism and democracy; and finally, philosophical Modernism, or the Philosophy of Action, represented by such men as Blondel, Le Roy, and the Abbé Laberthonnière.[159] Bautain was neither an historical critic nor a social liberal. He knew little about the critical methods which German scholars were even in his day applying to the study of the Bible and the history of the Church; and what little he heard about them shocked him greatly. He took comparatively little interest in the efforts of Lamennais and Lacordaire to reconcile Catholicism with democracy and political liberalism; they, not he, are the real ancestors of "social Modernism."[160] He would even have recoiled from the views expressed by Le Roy on the nature of religious dogmas. Nevertheless, the voluntaristic principles which Le Roy pushes to such lengths in his *Dogme et Critique*[161] are essentially Bautain's principles; and Le Roy got them, in part, through devious channels whose windings can be clearly traced, from Bautain. Bautain was to the French philosophical Modernists what Newman was to Tyrrell. If Cardinal Newman is venerated—and read—by good Catholics, in spite of the alarming conclusions which have been deduced from some of his teachings, why should Bautain, the French Newman, be so completely ignored by the Church which he loved and served so well?

I have spoken as if the collapse of the Modernist movement put a definite end to Bautain's influence. That is not strictly true. Philosophical Modernism, before its collapse, had made its contribution to the general current of contemporary thought; and several of the former leaders of the school—Blondel and Le Roy, for instance—are still philosophizing as individuals, in a somewhat

[159] See Houtin, *Histoire du modernisme catholique*, Paris, 1913.

[160] It is true that Bautain wrote a popular book on *Religion et Liberté*, and ran for election in '48 on a liberal platform; but his political liberalism was not nearly so thorough-going as that of many other Catholic priests.

[161] Le Roy says, for example (*op. cit.* 25-26) that "'God is personal' means 'act in your relations with God as in your relations with a human person.' Similarly, 'Jesus is risen' means 'be in the same relation to him as you would have been before his death, or as if in the presence of a contemporary.'"

more cautious manner, preferably on non-religious themes. The works of Ollé-Laprune, the soberest and least speculative of all Bautain's spiritual successors, and the only one who never incurred the charge of heresy, still have an enormous vogue. And—who knows?—the present Aristotelian revival in Catholic circles may not last forever. Christian thought, as Professor Gilson[162] is fond of pointing out, has swung back and forth continually between Platonism and Aristotelianism; and even since the Encyclical *Aeterni Patris* there is room for another pendulum-swing, since the philosophy of St. Thomas contains Platonic elements. When Platonism comes back into its own, the philosophy of Bautain and his successors may again receive the attention it deserves from his co-religionists. Meanwhile, the rest of us, less concerned with questions of orthodoxy and heresy, are free to salute with respect the noble and pathetic figure of the "philosopher of Strasbourg," who did so much to make Catholicism intelligible to the modern mind.

[162] M. le professeur Étienne Gilson, professor of Mediaeval Philosophy at the Sorbonne. It was Professor Gilson who first directed my attention to Bautain.

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## III. Bautain's Works

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Avertissement sur la philosophie de M. Bautain, prêtre de notre diocèse et professeur à l'Académie de Strasbourg. Strasbourg, Le Roux, 1834.

Exposition abrégée des questions les plus importants de la religion, adressée aux élèves de son grand-séminaire par l'Évêque de Strasbourg. Paris, 1834.

Designed to warn the students against the errors of Bautain.

Lettre à M. l'Évêque de Strasbourg, à l'occasion de son Avertissement sur l'enseignement de M. l'Abbé Bautain, par Paul Rochette. Strasbourg, 1834.

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Counter-rebuttal by the anonymous critic (F. J. Clavé?).

Coup d'oeil sur l'enseignement de M. l'Abbé Bautain, par l'Abbé D.... Strasbourg, 1835.

Reprinted, with additions, from the articles signed "L.D.A." in the *Ami de la Religion*.

Quelques réflexions sur l'enseignement de M. Bautain, en réponse au coup d'oeil de l'Abbé D.... par un laïque (Fayet?). Strasbourg, 1835.

Éclaircissements sur l'enseignement de M. Bautain, en réponse au coup d'oeil de l'Abbé D.... sur cet enseignement. Par l'Abbé Théodore Ratisbonne. Strasbourg, 1835.

Die Lehren des Hermesianismus über das Verhältnis der Vernunft zur Offenbarung gutgeheissen, und die entgegenstehenden Ansichten als falsch und gefährlich verworfen von dem Bischof von Strassburg, Herrn Lepappe de Trévern, nebst einem Breve Sr. Päpst. Heiligkeit, Gregors XVI. Von J. W. J. Braun. Bonn, 1835.

Rapport à Mgr. l'Évêque de Strasbourg sur les écrits de M. l'Abbé Bautain. Publié par ordre de sa Grandeur. Strasbourg, 1838.

Brief an Bautain. Von J. A. Möhler. Printed in Möhler's *Schriften und Aufsätze*, ed. Döllinger, Regensburg, 1839, II, 141-164.

La chrétienne de nos jours suivant M. l'Abbé Bautain, par un chrétien protestant. Paris, Grassart, 1863.

Pp. 35.

To this list should be added the anonymous Mennaisian's critique (*Ens. Phil. B*), which is so important a source that I have included it in the list of Bautain's works (supra, III).

## V. Thinkers Immediately Influenced by Bautain

### 1. Adolphe Carl

Bannache, Père, Notice Biographique sur le R. P. Carl. Paris, 1874.
Carl, A., L'enseignement de la rhétorique, doit-il précéder dans l'instruction de la jeunesse, celui de la logique? Châlons, 1824.
..... De origine et naturâ verbi humani. Strasbourg, 1827.
..... Essai sur le langage articulé. Strasbourg, 1827.
..... Du matérialisme en médecine. Strasbourg, 1828.
The last three essays are theses for the degrees of *docteur-ès-lettres* and doctor of medicine.

### 2. Théodore Ratisbonne

(Anon.) Le T. R. Père Marie-Théodore Ratisbonne, fondateur de la société des prêtres et de la congrégation des religieuses de Notre-Dame de Sion. Paris, 1903.
See Vol. I, Chaps. III-X, XX; Vol. II, Chap. XIV, for references to Bautain.
Ratisbonne, T., Des obligations qui naissent du mariage. Strasbourg, 1826.
..... Essai sur l'éducation morale. Strasbourg, 1828.
..... Éclaircissements sur l'enseignement de M. Bautain, en réponse au coup d'oeil de l'Abbé D.... sur cet enseignement. Strasbourg, 1835.

### 3. Isidore Goschler

Goschler, I., Acte public sur la puissance paternelle. Strasbourg, 1826.
..... Du Panthéisme. Strasbourg, 1839. New ed., Paris, 1862.
..... De psalmorum poësi et philosophiâ. Strasbourg, 1840.
Theses for the degrees of *licence en droit* and *docteur-ès-lettres*.
Among the works of Ratisbonne and Goschler should also be mentioned their speeches at the Hôtel-de-Ville, before the *Société d'encouragement pour le travail parmi les Israélites de Strasbourg*, printed by Silbermann, 1826-27, and preserved in a collection of pamphlets at Juilly.

### 4. Henri de Bonnechose

Besson, L., Vie du Cardinal de Bonnechose. 2 vols., Paris, 1887.
See Vol. I, Chaps. V-VII and p. 507, for references to Bautain.
Bonnechose, H. de, Letter to the *Revue Européenne*, May, 1834.
..... Introduction to the *Philosophie du Christianisme*.
Besides this important introduction by Bonnechose, autobiographical notices and letters were contributed by four of the other disciples: Ratisbonne (Adéodat), Goschler (Eudore), Lewel (Julien), and Adolphe Carl.

### 5. Mgr. Maret (1805-1884)

Ferraz, *op. cit.*, 357-373.
Bazin, G., Vie de Mgr. Maret. 2 vols., Paris, 1891.

Maret, H. L. C., Essai sur le panthéisme. Paris, 1840. 3rd. ed., revised, 1845.

. . . . . Théodicée chrétienne, ou comparaison de la notion chrétienne avec la notion rationaliste de Dieu. Paris, 1844.

. . . . . Philosophie et Religion. Dignité de la raison humaine et nécessité de la révélation divine. Paris, 1856.

. . . . . Lettre . . . à nos seigneurs les évêques de France. Paris, 1858.

Reply to Dom Guéranger's attack on the above.

### 6. Alphonse Gratry (1805-1872)

Ferraz, *op. cit.*, 373-431.

Perraud, A. L., The Last Days of Father Gratry. Translated by special permission, by Henrietta Lear. London, 1872.

Ollé-Laprune, Éloge du P. Gratry. Paris, 1896.

Wagner, "Le Père Gratry en Alsace," *Revue catholique d'Alsace*, 1900, pp. 836 *et seq.*

Perraud, A. L., Le Père Gratry: sa vie et ses oeuvres. Paris, 1900.

Chauvin, Le Père Gratry. Paris, 1901.

Braun, L. L., Gratry's Theorie der religiösen Erkenntnis. Strassburg, 1914.

Pointud-Guillemot, Essai sur la philosophie de Gratry. Paris, 1917.

. . . . . La doctrine sociale de Gratry. Paris, 1917.

Gratry, A., Des préceptes de la rhétorique. Strasbourg, 1829.

. . . . . Dissertatio philosophica de methodis scientiarum. Strasbourg, 1833.

Twin theses for the degree of *docteur-ès-lettres*, written under Bautain's direction.

. . . . . Philosophie. De la connaissance de Dieu. 2nd ed., 2 vols., Paris, 1854.

This work was "crowned" by the *Académie Française*. Eng. ed., translated by Alger, with title "Guide to the Knowledge of God," Boston, 1892.

. . . . . Logique. Paris, 1854.

. . . . . De la connaissance de l'âme. 2 vols., Paris, 1857.

. . . . . La philosophie du Credo. Paris, 1861.

. . . . . Les sources de la régénération sociale. Paris, 1862.

. . . . . La morale et la loi de l'histoire. 2 vols., Paris, 1868; 4th ed., Paris, 1909.

. . . . . Souvenirs de ma jeunesse. 16th ed., Paris, 1920.

See pp. 133-158 for references to Bautain.

For a fuller list of Gratry's works, consult the biographies of Perraud and Chauvin, *supra*. This list is designed to exhibit Bautain's influence upon Gratry. For a good essay on Gratry in English, see Guérard, *op. cit.* (*supra*, section I, 1, of this bibliography). On Bonnetty and other thinkers less directly influenced by Bautain, see Ferraz, *op. cit.*, 345-355.

## VI. Thinkers Influenced by Bautain Through Gratry

### 1. Ernest Hello (1828-1885)

Guérard, *op. cit.*, 63-68.

Hello, E., M. Renan, L'Allemagne, et l'athéisme du xixe siècle. Paris, 1859.

..... L'Homme. Paris, 1872. 2nd ed., Paris, 1894.

..... Les plateaux de la balance. Paris, 1880.

..... Philosophie et athéisme. Paris, 1888. 2nd ed., Paris, 1903.

..... Le siècle, les hommes et les idées. Paris, 1895. 4th ed., Paris, 1905.

### 2. Léon Ollé-Laprune (1839-1898)

Fonsegrive, G., Léon Ollé-Laprune. Paris, 1898.

Blondel, M., "Portraits contemporains: Léon Ollé-Laprune." *Revue politique et littéraire*, 4th series, XII (1898), pp. 216-221.

..... Léon Ollé-Laprune. Paris, 1900.

Bazaillas, La crise de la croyance. Paris, 1901.
Consult the table of contents for references to Ollé-Laprune.

Fonsegrive, G., Léon Ollé-Laprune: l'homme et le penseur. Paris, 1912.

Ollé-Laprune, De la certitude morale. Paris, 1881. 9th ed., Paris, 1924.

..... La philosophie et le temps présent. Paris, 1890. 2nd ed., Paris, 1894.

..... Les sources de la paix intellectuelle. Paris, 1892.

..... Le prix de la vie. Paris, 1894. 44th ed., Paris, 1923.

..... La vitalité chrétienne. Paris, 1901.
Articles collected by G. Goyau, who also contributes an excellent introduction on Ollé-Laprune.

..... La raison et le rationalisme. Edited by V. Delbos. Paris, 1907.

## VII. Contemporary Thinkers Influenced by Ollé-Laprune: the School of the Philosophy of Action

### 1. Maurice Blondel

*Bulletin de la société française de philosophie*, 1902, p. 190; 1908, pp. 273, 293.

Parodi, D., La philosophie contemporaine en France. 2nd ed., Paris, 1920.
Pp. 302-306, 308, 315.

Gunn, J. A., Modern French Philosophy. London, 1922.
Pp. 86-88, 259-269, 311-312.

Gilbert, K., Maurice Blondel's Philosophy of Action. Univ. of North Carolina, 1924.

Blondel, M., L'Action. Paris, 1893.
The most important work produced by the school. Out of print, and very hard to obtain. The only copy I have found in this country is at the Widener Library, Harvard.
. . . . . Lettre sur les exigences de la pensée contemporaine en matière d'apologétique. Saint-Dizier, 1896.
Reprinted from the *Annales de philosophie chrétienne*, Jan.-June, 1896.
. . . . . "L'Illusion idéaliste." *Rev. de métaphysique et de morale*, 1898.
. . . . . Le procès de l'intelligence. Paris, 1922.

2. The Abbé Laberthonnière

Lilley, A. L., Modernism: a record and review. London, 1908.
Chap. VIII.
Laberthonnière, L., Essais de philosophie religieuse. Paris, 1903.
. . . . . Réalisme chrétien et idéalisme grec. Paris, 1904.
. . . . . Positivisme et Catholicisme. Paris, 1911.

3. Edouard Le Roy

Lilley, *op. cit.*
Chap. XIII.
Parodi, *op. cit.*
Pp. 242-245, 307-311.
Le Roy, E., "Science et philosophie." *Rev. de métaphysique et de morale*, VII-VIII (1899-1900).
. . . . . "Qu'est-ce qu'un dogme?" *Quinzaine*, Apr., 1905.
Eng. translation by Robinson, with title "What is a Dogma?" Chicago, Open Court, 1918.
. . . . . Dogme et Critique. Paris, 1907.
The above reprinted, with the objections of certain critics, and lengthy rebuttal.
. . . . . Une philosophie nouvelle, Henri Bergson. 2nd ed., Paris, 1913.
Eng. translation by Benson, N. Y., 1914.

4. George Fonsegrive (-Lespinasse; published novels under pseudonym of Yves le Querdec)

Barbier, Abbé, Les démocrates chrétiens et le modernisme. Paris, 1907.
Pp. 215-265.
Fonsegrive, G., Essai sur le libre arbitre, sa théorie et son histoire. Paris, 1887. 2nd ed., Paris, 1896.
. . . . . La causalité efficiente. Paris, 1893.
. . . . . Catholicisme et démocratie. Paris, 1898.
. . . . . Le Catholicisme et la vie de l'esprit. Paris, 1898. 2nd ed., Paris, 1899.
. . . . . La crise du libéralisme. Paris, 1899.
. . . . . L'Attitude du catholique devant la science. Paris, 1900.

ST. ALBERT'S COLLEGE LIBRARY

. . . . . La crise sociale. Paris, 1901.
. . . . . Catholicisme et libre pensée. Paris, 1905.
. . . . . Essais sur la connaissance. Paris, 1909.
Note especially the essay on *Le Kantisme et la pensée contemporaine.*
. . . . . Éléments de philosophie. Paris, no date.

### 5. Ferdinand Brunetière (1846-1906)

Sargent, Les Grands Convertis. Paris, 1906.
Fonsegrive, Ferdinand Brunetière. Paris, 1908.
Parodi, D., Traditionalisme et Démocratie. Paris, 1909.
Part I, Chap. I, "Traditionalisme et Moralité: M. F. Brunetière."
Brunetière, F., La science et la religion. Paris, 1895.
. . . . . La renaissance de l'idéalisme. Paris, 1896.
. . . . . Le besoin de croire. Besançon, 1898.
. . . . . Après le procès: réponse à quelques intellectuels. Paris, 1898.
. . . . . Les raisons actuelles de croire. Lille, 1899.
. . . . . L'idée de solidarité. Toulouse, 1900.
. . . . . Les motifs d'espérer. Lyons, 1901.
. . . . . Discours de combat (4 series). Paris, 1900-1903.
. . . . . L'Action sociale du christianisme. Paris, 1904.
. . . . . Sur les chemins de la croyance. Paris, 1905.

I list only those works of Brunetière which show him as a Catholic apologist, and as a popularizer of the Philosophy of Action. Wilbois and de Sailly should also be mentioned as adherents of the school of the Philosophy of Action.

## VIII. On the Philosophy of Action, and Its Relation to Modernism and Pragmatism

### 1. Expositions and Critiques of the Philosophy of Action

Buonaiuti, E., "La filosofia dell'azione." *Studi religiosi*, V, 211-256.
Leclère, A., "Le mouvement catholique kantien en France à l'heure présente." *Kantstudien*, VII (1902).
Goujon, Abbé, Les ennemis de la raison. La philosophie de la volonté et l'apologétique de l'immanence. Chez l'auteur, 1906.
De Tonquedec, La notion de la vérité dans la philosophie nouvelle. Paris, 1908.
Ruggiero, G. de, Modern Philosophy. N. Y., 1921.
P. 302.

### 2. On the Philosophy of Action in Its Relation to Catholic Modernism

Cavallanti, Abbate, Modernismo e Modernisti. Brescia, 1907.
Mercier, Cardinal, Le modernisme. Brussels, 1908.
Eng. translation, St. Louis, 1910.
Hautcoeur, A., Autour du Modernisme. Paris, 1908.

Lebreton, J., L'Encyclique et la théologie moderniste. Paris, 1908.

Gaudaud, "Les erreurs du modernisme." *La foi catholique*, 1908-09.

*La foi catholique* was founded to combat Modernism, and contains much interesting material.

Godryez, J., The Doctrine of Modernism and its Refutation. Phila., 1908.

Rickaby, J., The Modernist. London, 1908.

Tyrrell, G., (translator) The Programme of Modernism. N. Y., 1908.

The response of a group of Modernists to the Pope's Encyclical, which is printed in full and examined point by point.

Beaurredon, C., Le modernisme, ou les bases de la foi. Paris, 1908.

Sabatier, P., Modernism. London, 1908.

. . . . . Les Modernistes. Paris, 1909.

Delmont, T., Modernisme et Modernistes. Paris, 1909.

Maumus, E. V., Les Modernistes. Paris, 1909.

Kübel, J., Geschichte des katholischen Modernismus. Tübingen, 1909.

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Cauly, Mgr., Libéralisme et Modernisme. Paris, 1910.

Vermeersch, A., De modernismo tractatus. Bruges, 1910.

Schnitzer, J., "Der katholische Modernismus." *Zeitschrift für Politik*, I (1911).

. . . . . Der katholische Modernismus. Berlin, 1912.

Anthology of Modernist writings, *Klassiker der Religion* series.

Tavernier, E., Le Modernisme. Paris, 1912.

Lobstein, P., Quelques enseignements du modernisme. Paris, 1912.

Fontaine, J., La synthèse du modernisme. Paris, 1912.

Bampton, J. M., Modernism and Modern Thought. London, 1913.

Houtin, A., Histoire du modernisme catholique. Paris, 1913.

The best history of the movement. Chaps. I and III make clear the relation of the Philosophy of Action to the other aspects of the Modernist movement. Besides the references given above, consult Denzinger's Enchiridion for the Decree *Lamentabili*, the Encyclical *Pascendi*, and the Decree *Sacrorum*; see also the articles on *Modernism* in the *Catholic Encyclopaedia* and in Hastings' *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*. In English, the best presentation of the Modernist position will be found in the works of George Tyrrell.

### 3. On the Philosophy of Action in Its Relation to Pragmatism

Sailly, B. de, "Les éléments de la philosophie de l'action." *Annales de philosophie chrétienne*, 151: 180-195 (1905).

Bourdeau, J., Pragmatisme et modernisme. Paris, 1908.

Leclère, A., Pragmatisme; Modernisme; Protestantisme. Paris, 1909.

Hébert, M., Le Pragmatisme. Étude de ses divers formes anglo-américaines, françaises et italiennes et de sa valeur religieuse. 2nd ed., Paris, 1909.

Fouillée, A., La pensée et les nouvelles écoles anti-intellectualistes. 2nd ed., Paris, 1911.

Boutroux, E., Science et Religion dans la philosophie contemporaine. Paris, 1908.
See Part II, Chap. III, "La Philosophie de l'Action."
Berthelot, R., Un Romantisme Utilitaire: étude sur le mouvement pragmatiste. 3 vols., Paris, 1913. Vol. III.
Stebbing, L. S., Pragmatism and French Voluntarism. Cambridge, 1914.
Spirito, Ugo, Il Pragmatismo nella Filosofia Contemporanea. Saggio critico, con Appendice Bibliografica. Florence, 1921.
Note especially Part II, Chap. V, "Il Pragmatismo Religioso."
Leroux, E., Le Pragmatisme américain et anglais. Paris, 1923.
Arcuno, O., La Filosofia dell'Azione e il Pragmatismo. Florence, 1924.
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# INDEX

# INDEX


Abelard, 255, 256, 270.
Absolute, the, 52, 61, 63, 76, 226, 241, 242, 243, 293, 296; *v.* God, Being, Infinite.
Abstraction, 156; *v.* Reason.
"Adéodat," *81*, 210, 211.
"Adolphe," 81.
Affre, Mgr., 93.
Aggregation, 122 ff., 156, 163; *v.* Analysis, Science, Logic.
Agnosticism, 295, 296.
Alexandrian Fathers, viii, 71, 99, 223, 256, 270, 282.
All, the, 242-244.
*Ami de la Religion*, 89, 263, 306.
Analogy, method of, 70, 90, 102, 122, 123, 130, *219-223*, 250.
Analysis and synthesis, 156, 162, 288.
Ancillon, 57.
Angels, 129, 131, 132.
*Annales de philosophie chrétienne*, 31, 83, 291.
Anti-intellectualism, ix, 41, 72, 75, 90, 91, 96, 142, 159, 168, 262, 290; *v.* Reason, Fideism, Intuitionism, Traditionalism, Voluntarism, Pragmatism.
Antinomies, Kantian, 74, 144.
Apologetics, 69, 174; non-argumentative, 91, 209; of Bautain, in contrast with the old, 33 ff., 81, 94, 142, 201, *209 ff.*, 224, 231, 232, 247-250; of Châteaubriand, 6; of Frayssinous, 5, 32; of Laberthonnière and the Modernists, 232, 294; of the heart and of the intelligence, 209 ff., *212*; of the Scholastics, 31, 88, 95, 247-250; of the Traditionalists, 7 ff., 26, 31, 32, 258.
Argument, futility of rational, 68, 69, 76, 77, 79, 174, 175, 223, 252, 268, 270, 282.
Aristotle and Aristotelianism, 127, 142, 161, 214, 246, 253, *255, 256*, 264, *268-270*, 272-274, 277, 282, 285, 298.
Asceticism, 77, 120.
Atheism, 3, 18, 33, 72, 251.
"Atheist Catholics," 38.
Attention, 152-154, 157.
Authority, 8, 14, 18, 24, 61, 62, 75, 95, 96, 100, 102, 104, 136-140, 149, 184, 187, 196, 198, 203, 257, 258, 262; objective and subjunctive, 203; of the Catholic Church, 20, 22, 96, 100, 142, 203-207, 209, 262, 271; of the Pope, 22; of Scripture, 205, 206, 229, 262; of tradition, 204, 262; *v.* Liberty.
Autonomy, 34, 61, *64*, 78, *95*, 104, 109, 131, 190, 240, 278; *v.* Spontaneity, Liberty.
*Avenir, l'*, 28.
Axioms, 78, 143, 144, 150, 168, 173, 188, 259, 269, 272.
Azaïs, 258.
Baader, F., viii, 35, 49, 50, 51-54, 71, 72, 80, 121, 231, 262, 263.
Bacon, Francis, 13, 236, 237, 271.
Ballanche, P.-S., 16, 17, *23-25*, 32, 83, 258.
Base and acid, *106*, 109, 110, 118, 122, 128, 152; *v.* Plasm, Being, Nature.
Baudin, Eugène, x, 62, 64, 73, 90, 138, 139, 176, 177, 239, 303, 305.
Bautain, Louis,
Early life and philosophical training, 56-63.
His conversion, and its effect upon his philosophy, 63-79, 103-105.
Unsuccessful attempt to reform Catholic philosophy, 83-93, 256, 265, 283.
Recantation, 93-97, 284.
Later life, 97-101.
Relations with his pupils, 80-83, 85-87, 97-99, 287, 288; *v.* Gratry, etc.
Philosophical writings, 32, 57, 73, 81-82, 87, 91, 99-101, 303-306.
As an apologist, 32-34, 79-81, 84, 209-232, 283; *v.* Apologetics.
As an educator, 86, 89, 92, 138-140.
As an orator, 59, 101, 141.
As a psychologist, 117, 135, 144, *145 ff.*
General plan of his philosophy, 102, 135, 213-219.
Its negative, anti-intellectualistic aspect, 75-79, 140 ff., 224 ff., 229 ff., 247 ff., 265 ff.
Its constructive and eclectic aspects, 75, 102 ff., 213 ff., 225-227, 263-265, 274 ff.
His relations with Cousin and the Eclectic school, *56-60*, 88, 245, 246, 263, 264; with the Scotch realistic school, 57, 58, 236-238; with Kant,

66, 74, 273, 274; with the Post-Kantian Idealists, 60-63, 238-245; with the German Catholic Romanticists, 71, 72, 262, 263; with the Traditionalists, 32, 186-188, 257-262, 285, 286.
His hatred of Aristotle, 255, 256, 268, 269; of eighteenth-century philosophy, 234-236; of pantheism, 241-245; of scholasticism, 247-257.
His Platonism, 74, 75, 109, 117.
His political liberalism, 297.
His attitude toward Biblical criticism, 297.
His influence, 294-298.
Beauty, love of, 157, 158, 276; pantheistic conception of, 243; *v.* Dialectics, Good.
Being, 61, 71, 78, 102, 105, 106, 109, 118, 124, 129, 136, 161, 164, 176, 177, 217, 219, 225, 226, 228, 278, 287; and existence, 72, 128, 217-219; and life, 106 ff.; in general, 253, 254; *v.* God, Infinite, Absolute, Essence, Life.
Belief, 169; *v.* Faith.
Bergson, ix, 105, 113, 142, 156, 159, 162, 163, 167, 291, 292, 294-296.
Berkeley, 151.
Berlin Academists, 57.
Berthelot, R., ix, 199, 295, 314.
*Besoin de croire*, 31, 210; *v.* Need.
Biran, Maine de, ix, 30, 293, 294.
Blondel, M., x, 289-293, 295, 297, 310, 311.
Boehme, Jacob, 39, 43, 44, 50, 71, 72, 263.
Boersch, C., 60, 61, 306.
Boëthius, 160, 161.
Boisserée, the brothers, 40, 49.
Bonald, Vicomte de, vii, viii, 6, 7-*11*, 14-18, 25, 26, 32, 38, 185-187, 255, 258, 259, 262, 285, 287; *v.* Traditionalism.
Bonaparte, Napoleon, 4, 5, 7, 25, 282.
Bonn, school of, vii, 46, 49, 55, 90, 262.
Bonnechose, H. de, 86, 89, 91, 92, 98, 282, 308.
Bonnetty, A., 31, 83, 95, 285, 309.
Bossuet, 17, 251.
Boutroux, E., 290, 292-294.
Bréhier, Prof., 43.
Brentano, 40, 49.
Brunetière, F., 291, 312.
Bunsen, Baron, 72.
Bushnell, Horace, 231.
Cabalism, viii, 50, 71, 114, 216.
Cabanis, 29, 30.
Campaux, A., 35, 57, 59, 60, 72, 221, 302.
Capacities, innate, 187, 226; *v.* Ideas, Need.
Carl, Adolphe, 81, 82, 85, *114-115*, 139, 155, 216, 308.
Cartesian; *v.* Descartes.
Categorical imperative, 47, 263.
Catholicism, revival of, in France, 3 ff., 53 ff.; in Germany, 36 ff.; and political conservatism, 4, 16, 18, 25, 27, 29, 38; and political liberalism, 25 ff., 297; and paganism, 21, 22, 255, 256, 285; and Romanticism, 38 ff.
Center, vital, 108, 133, 164, 217, 219; *v. Foyer.*
Certitude, 19, 53, 54, 58, 59, 169, 174, 175, 184, 190, 191, *193 ff.*, 210, 211, 289, 293; and faith, 194; subjective and objective principles of, 193 ff.; three kinds of, 196, 197, 205; *v.* Truth, Knowledge.
Charles X, 32.
Châteaubriand, *6-7*, 21, 29, 32, 37, 282.
*Choses de l'autre monde*, 56, 57, 62, *101*, 130, 237, 245, 265, 273, *305*.
Christ, Jesus, 229, 230, 257, 283, 297; resurrection of, 94.
Christianity, 21, 30, 31, 34, 37; *v.* Revelation; "new," 30; *v.* Saint-Simon.
Cicero, 62.
Claudius, Matthias, 42.
Clement; *v.* Alexandrian Fathers.
Coe, G. A., 138.
*Cognitio centralis*, 44.
Cognition, 71, *145 ff.*, *175*, *176*; *v.* Knowledge.
Coleridge, 161.
Collins, Ross, x, 28, 302.
Colmar, Mgr., 55, 64, 65, 69, 86.
Common consent, Common sense; *v. Sens commun.*
Comte, Auguste, ix, 23, 30, 234, 265, 290.
Conception, 118, 120, 121, 148, *150-152*, 183, 188, 190; *v.* Generation, Thought.
Concepts, 47, 48, 154; and ideas, *v.* Ideas; and percepts, 199, 200.
Concordat, 4.
Condillac, 12, 29, 30, 32, 153, 163, 234, 236, 257, 261, 276.
Conscience, 8, 47, 197, 198, 206, 207, *227*, 248, 278; intellectual, 196, 203.
Contemplation, 154, 160, 183.

Contract, social, 8, 234; *v.* Rousseau.
Cousin, Victor, 30, 34, 35, 56, 59, 60, 88, 102, 234, 245, 265; *v.* Eclecticism.
Critical Philosophy, 66, 74, 77, 269; *v.* Kant.
*Critique of Pure Reason*, 66, 74, 274; *of Practical Reason*, 66; *v.* Kant.
Crystallization, 110, 122.
Cuvier, 45.
Damiron, 5, 57, 73, 233, 301.
Darwin and Darwinism, 134, 227.
Death, 109, 120, 121, 132; *v.* Immortality.
Deduction and induction, 155, 156, 162, 188; *v.* Logic, Syllogism.
Definition, futility of, 165.
Deism, 3, 18, 33, 51, 224, 229, 249, 250.
Delbos, V., 9, 310.
Democracy, 8, 16, 23, 28, 100, 186, 297.
Demonstration and monstration, 162, 165.
Denzinger, 94.
Dependence, 75, 294; *v.* Humility.
*Der contraponirte Gott*, 48.
Descartes, and the Cartesian philosophy, vii, viii, 19, 46-49, 52, 127, 170, 247, 261, *271*, *272*, 285; and French Scholasticism, 31, 251-255, 257; *v.* Doubt, Cartesian.
Destiny, 133, 134, 249, 261.
Determinism, 239.
Development, 77, 78, 121, *135*, 148-150, 152, 154, 156, 157, 212, 243, 261, 275; embryonic, 108, 110 ff.; physical, 116 ff., 275; mental and spiritual, 117 ff., 145 ff., 276 ff.; *v.* Evolution.
Dewey, John, ix, 199, 245, 290, 291.
Dialectical *vs.* positive method, 256.
Dialectics, 255, 285, 296; of the intelligence and of the will, 159; of beauty, 161; *v.* Logic.
Diderot, 3.
*Ding an sich*; *v.* Thing-in-itself.
*Doctores biblici vs. doctores sententiarii*, 256, 285.
Döllinger, 49, 95.
Dogma, 150, 205, 210, 218, 222, 223; evolution of, 55.
Dogmatism, 19, 104, 254, 278; "moral," 292-294.
Doubt, Cartesian, 46, 91, 170, 252, 261.
Dualism, 49, 52, 124, 224.
Duchesne, Abbé, 297.
Duhem, 292.
Durkheim, 260.
Earth-Spirit, 129, 137; *v.* World-Spirit.
Eckhart, Meister, 50, 71.
Eclecticism, 30, 32, 59, 73, 88, 161, 234, 238, *245*, *246*, 257, *263-265*, 282.
Education, 26, 27, 82, 83, *138-140*, 148.
Ego and non-Ego, 226, 278; *v.* Self.
Ego(t)ism, 234, 239-241, 276; *v.* Individualism, Autonomy.
Eichendorff, 40.
*Eidos*, Platonic, 125; *v.* Form, Idea.
Eighteenth century, philosophy of the, vii, 8, 12, 29, 46, 202, 224, 233, *234-236*, 241; *v.* Condillac.
*Élan vital*, 104, 105, 110, 111, 113, 124; *v.* Bergson, Vital principle.
Emerson, 161, 177, 185, 268.
Empiricism, ix, 10, 18, 128, 199, 202, 236, 294.
Encyclical *Æterni Patris*, 284, 298; *Pascendi*, 296.
Encyclopedists, the, 265.
Enlightenment, the, (*Aufklärung*), vii, 37, 47, 49.
*Enseignement de la philosophie en France au xixe siècle* (*Ens. Phil. F.*), *32*, *87-89*, 166, 167, 187, 212, 222, 223, 236, 237, 257, 258, 271, *305*.
*Enseignement philosophique de . . . Bautain* (*Ens. Phil. B.*), 80, *89*, 115, 122, 141, 162, 163, 166, 184, 189, 191, 193, 197, 198, 207, 212, 213, 218, 220, 221, *304-307*.
Epicurus, 125, 246, 276.
Equality, 23, 62, 73.
Erdmann, 57.
*Ére Nouvelle, l'*, 28.
Error, possibility of, 198.
Essence and existence, 108; *v.* Being.
"Eudore," 81, 211.
*Évidence*, intuitive, 134, 155, 169, 184, 187, 198, 200, 201, 258; *v.* Intuition.
Evil, 129, 131, 132, 192, 247, 250; pantheistic conception of, 243.
Evolution, 77, *135*, 145, 148, 163, 167, 185, *274*, *275*; of the Absolute, 242; *v.* Development.
Experience, 13, 30, 70, 94, 140, 143, *145*, *146*, 150, 155, 168, 180, 196, 197, 199, 202, 219, 252, 272; and knowledge, 146; future, 201, 203; religious, 218; *v.* Empiricism.
Explanation, 154, 158.
Eye, psychic, 160.
Faculties, cognitive, 143, 144, 150, 153, 189, 226, 237, 275, 277, 288; evolu-

tion of the, 145-148; higher, 44, 157-161, 190, 238, 254, 274, 277; innate, 162; *v.* Imagination, Reason, Intelligence, Faith.
Faith, 19, 57, 77, 110, 165, 168-171, 224, 236, 282, 295; and authority, 262; and intelligence, 157, 170, 171; and knowledge, 78, 157, 166, 169-171, *176*, 199, 200, 212, 218, 221, 222, 252, 279, 289; and love, 159, 173; and will, 171, 172, 293; as a cognitive faculty, 44, 71, 208, 279; blind (*fides implicita*), 78, 143, 168, 186, 201, 208, 209; in self *vs.* faith in God, 294; primacy of, 44, 76, 168, 173-175, 259; *v.* Reason, Fideism, Feeling, Taste.
Fall, of man, 22, 131, 135, 279; of the World-Spirit, 130.
Fatalism, 34, 254.
Fechner, 129.
Fecundation, 107, 109, 119, 126, 128, *148-151*; *v.* Stimulation.
Feeling, 76-79, 145, 152, *155*, 170, 183, 192, *198*, *199*, 219; *v.* Taste, Faith, Intuition, *Évidence*, Religion.
Ferraz, M., 104, 143, 186, 187, 286 ff., *301*, 308, 309.
Fichte, 57, *60*, 71, 103, 138, 145, 146, 167, 239, 241.
Fideism, viii, 97, 142, 143, *167 ff.*, 209, 287, 296; *v.* Faith.
First Cause, 225, 248, 272; *v.* God.
Fiske, John, 227.
Fliche, Mme., 64, 71, 303.
Foisset, M., 5, 26, 303.
Foisset, Th., 87, 88, 302.
*Fonds Bautain*, *62*, 72 ff., 84, 95, 115, 131, 143, 144, 163 ff., 174 ff., 191, 197, 198, 205, 206, 215 ff., 223 ff., 230, 235, 236, 240, 241, 249, 250, 258, 279, *305*, *306*.
Fonsegrive, G., 291, *310-312*.
Form, 120, *126*, 128, *148*, 226, 227, 242; and life, 113, 219, 241; and spirit, 182, 214, 216, 217; general and particular, 150; *v. Eidos*, Substance, Being, Nature, Plasm.
Fouillée, 290, 313.
*Foyer*, *105-108*, 111, 112, 141, 146, 163, 219, 236; *v.* Center.
Francke, 42.
Frayssinous, 5, 29, 32.
Freedom, 140, 222; *v.* Liberty.
Free-will, 34; *v.* Liberty.
Freud, 114.
Froebel, 139.
Functions, organic and mental, 116, 117, 145, *147*, 190; instrumental character of, 112, 147, 159.
Galileo, 13.
Gallicanism, 91.
Gallitzin, Princess, 42, 43.
Galvani, 45.
Generation, 109; *v.* Conception.
Genius, *80*, 151, 158, 162, 177, 180-185, 187, 190, 202, 207, 216, 242, 243, 269.
Germ and sperm, 128, 148 ff.; *v.* Being and life.
Gerson, 161.
Gilson, 298.
Gioberti, 287.
Gnosis, 223; *v. Science*.
God, attributes of, 225; existence of, 5, 47, 52, 72, 75-79, 93, 94, 168, 188, 190, 209, *224-228*, *247-250*, 252, 261, 272, 286, 288; experience of, 181, 200, 201, 214, 219, 272; knowledge of, 52, 70, 77, 287; of Nature, *vs.* the God of Man, 248-250, 255, 272; *v.* Absolute, Being, Infinite.
Görres, viii, 38, 49.
Goethe, 43-45, 104.
Golden Age, 14, 15.
Good, the True, and the Beautiful, the, 158, 161, 171, 195, 218, 279.
Goschler, Isidore, 81, 83, 85, 86, 89, 91, 241, 244, 308.
Gospels; *v.* Scriptures.
Goyau, G., 36, 38, 40, 41, 46, 47, 49, 50, 302, 310.
*Grand Séminaire*, 55, 85, 86, 89, 90, 92, 254.
Gratry, Alphonse, viii, 86, 98, 162, 186, *213-215*, 216, 217, *286-289*, 294, 309.
Gregory IX, 255, 256.
Günther, Anton, 48, 49, 52, 54.
Guizot, 35.
Hamann, 42.
Harnack, 256, 267.
Heart, 6, 39, 87, 79, 158, 176, 205, 210, 212, 221, 269; *vs.* the head, 77, 112, 288; *v.* Feeling, Faith.
Hegel, 34, 35, 39, 44, 51, 52, 60, 71, 102, 129, 135, 164, *239-241*, 245, 265, 283.
Heiler, F., 22, 283.
Hellenism *vs.* Hebraism, 256, 266, 267, 283, 284; *v.* Traditionalism and Rationalism.
Helvetius, 234.
Herder, 37. 45.

Hermes, Georg, vii, 46-48, 54, 90, 91, 262.
Hoffman, 50, 53.
Holbach, d', 3.
Houtin, 289, 297, 313.
Hugo, Victor, 30, 80, 177.
Humann, Georges, 35, 64.
Humann, Mlle. Louise, 34, 35, *64-73*, 84-87, *97*, 104, 212, 215, 235, 262, 273, 303.
Humanism, 293, 294.
Hume, ix, 180, 229.
Humility, 75, 95, 105, 110, 208, 229, 282; *v.* Submission, Dependence, Receptivity.
Idealism, viii, 19, 30, 33, 49, 55, 60, 66, 72, 104, 180, 233, *238-245*, 279, 282; *v.* Fichte, Schelling, Hegel; and realism, 292; ancient and modern, 279.
"Idea, The," 164, 223, *239-245*, 279.
Ideas, *159*, 170, *177*, 180-184, 204, 217, 218, 221, 242, 279, 280; *v.* Form, Capacities, Need, Notions; and ideals, 177, 192, 215, 226, 240, 268; and realities, 192; and sensations, 30; divine, 127, 179, 183, 273; generating (*idées-mères*), 102, 103, 121, 124, 125, 138, 212, 225, 260, 280, 287; innate, 10, 12, 13, 16, 149, 177, 187, 195, 196, 204, 217, 262, 272, 286; Platonic, 125, 127, 161; transcendental, 60, 222; *vs.* concepts or notions, 157, 159, 235.
Illumination, 183, 211.
Illuminism, 185, 207; *v.* Light.
Images, 149, 159, 161, 188, 276; *v.* Ideas.
Imagination, 120, 159-161, 243, 276, 279.
Immortality, 22, 34, 224, 237, 238, 252; *v.* Death.
Impressions, sense, 154; *v.* Senses.
Inanimate, the, 128; *v.* Inorganic.
Incarnation, the, 22, 33.
Index, the, 92, 208.
Individuality, 113, 116, 126, 132, 152.
Individualism, 104; *v.* Autonomy, Ego-(t)ism.
Infallibility, three kinds of, 53.
Infinite, the, 31, 40, 41, 48, 76, 133, 154, 158, 181, 219, 224, 225, 242, 243, 245; craving for the, 195, 210, 222; "men of the," 158, 180; "ray of the," 171; *v.* God, Absolute.
Ingold, Father, 98, 99, 302.
Inorganic, the, 122, 123, 152; *v.* Inanimate, Panvitalism.
Insight, immediate, 77, 78; *v.* Intuition, Intelligence, *Évidence*.
Inspiration, 177-183; *v.* Revelation.
Instinct, 13, 14, 135, 243, 244.
Intellect, 145, 205; *v.* Mind, Reason.
Intelligence, 67, 134, 137, 144, 147, 152, 154, 157-167, 170, 171, 183, 184, 189, 190, 205, 210, 216, 221, 223, 259, 262, 269, 273, 279; *v.* Intuition, Reason, Faith.
Interactionism, 124; *v.* Mind and Body.
Introspection, 178, 236.
Intuition, 13-16, 24, 39, 44, 57, 62, 68, 69, 90, 159, 167, 176, 180, 183, 214, 239, 254, 280, 284, 287, 288, 296; intellectual, 182, 240, 253; of the intelligence and of the soul, 183; *v.* Intelligence.
Intuitionism, ix, 142, *159 ff.*, *176*, 186, 259, 262, 284, 286, 288.
Intussusception, 103, 106, 116, 122, 163, 169; *v.* Aggregation, Life.
Jacobi, 44, 47, 57, 71, 161.
Jamblichus, 279.
James, William, ix, x, 197, 199, 290-296; and Bautain, 199-203; and Le Roy, 294-296.
Jones, Rufus, 227, 228.
Jouffroy, 57, 73.
Judgment, 155, 157, 172, 188, 190, 204; of relation, 153; synthetic *a priori*, 150.
Juilly, college of, 97, 114, 216, 305, 306.
"Julien," 81, 210.
Jung-Stilling, 42.
Justice, 138.
Justin Martyr, 99.
Juxtaposition, 122, 163; *v.* Aggregation.
Kant and Kantianism, viii, ix, 12, 30, 39, 44, 46, 47, 49, 51, 52, 55, 57, 60, *66*, *74*, 75, 96, 131, *143*, *144*, 149, 172, 189, 237, 239, 246, 249, *272-274*, 282, 284, 293, 312; *v.* Critical Philosophy.
Kepler, 13.
Knowledge, theory of, 19, 52, 53, 82, 138, 142, 209, 239, 257, 285, 293; and experience, 146; *a priori* and *a posteriori*, 150; mediate and immediate, 160; *v.* Cognition, Faith.
*Kritik der Reinen Vernunft*; *v* Critique.
Krummacher, 72.
Kuhn, 54.
Laberthonnière, L., 114, 232, 256, 283, 291 ff., 311; *v.* Philosophy of Action, Modernism.

Lacordaire, viii, 17-19, 28, 29, 33, 87, 92, 297.
Laforêt, 94, 285; *v.* Louvain.
Lamartine, 177, 282.
Lamennais, viii, *16-29*, 32, 50, 53, 80, 87-89, 186, 187, *190*, 191, 196, 197, 233, *257-259*, 261, 285, 297; *v. Sens commun*, Traditionalism.
La Motte-Fouqué, 40.
Language, theory of, 10, 11, 15, 83, 139, 152, 153, *155*, *156*, 174, 184, 186, 187, 204, 226, *259-261*, 276; *v.* Bonald.
Laromiguière, 30.
Leclère, 292, 312, 313.
Legitimism, 25, 33.
Leibnitz, 43, 45.
Leo XII, 17.
Leo XIII, 29, 284.
Le Roy, E., x, 290-297, 311; and William James, 294-296.
Lessing, 45.
Lewel, Jules, 81, 85, 91; his brother Nestor, 86.
Liberalism, political, 27-29; theological, 29; *v.* Catholicism, and.
Liberty, 23, 24, 27, 28, 60-62, 73, 100, 103, 258, 261; moral, 152, 153; of the press, 26; *v.* Authority, Autonomy, Freedom.
Lichtenberger, H., 36, 38, 43, 302.
Liebermann, B. F. L., 55, 89, 254, 303.
Life, 71, 82, 100, *103-110*, 113, *116*, 118, 119, 121, 122, 124, 126, 136, 140, 147, 156, 215, 216, 261; and mind, 147; divine, 51, 124, 130, 133, 137, 138; essence, existence and, 130, 225; general and particular, 127, 152; *v. Élan vital*, Being.
Light, 69-71, 106, 107, 121, *151*, 152, 160, 170, 175, *181-185*, 191, 204, 211, 223, 228, 273, 280, 289; and life, 71; and the Word, 184, 185; *v.* Illuminism, Mysticism.
Locke, John, 10, 12, 57, 145, 149.
Logic, 135, 188, 252, 255; "dialectical," 288; of intelligence and of reason, 162, 166 ff., 288; of organism and of mechanism, 162, 166; *v.* Dialectics, Syllogism.
Loisy, Abbé, 297.
Lombard, Peter, 270.
Louis XVIII, 25, 32.
Louvain, school of, 97, 284, 285.
Love, 134, 138, 158, 159, 183; and fear, in education, 139, 140; and intelligence, 279; law of, 138.
Lyman, E. W., 199.
McGiffert, A. C., 44, 45.
Maistre, Joseph de, vii, viii, *6-16*, 17, 18, 21, 23-25, 32-38, 83, 185, 255, 258, 262, 285; *v.* Traditionalism.
*Mal de siècle*, 31, 80, 138, 210.
Malebranche, viii, 176, 251, 272, 273, 284, 289.
Man, idea of, 125, 134, 222.
Manichaeism, 224, 250.
Manzoni, 282.
Maret, Abbé, 28, 29, 286, 287, 308, 309.
Martignac, 27.
Mary, the Virgin, 115.
Massillon, 17.
Masson, P. M., 6, 301.
Materialism, 29, 30, 33, 46, 74, 83, 124, 234, 238, 239, 241, 242, 276, 283.
Mathematics, 150, 202, *213 ff.*, 217, 219; transcendental, 219; *v.* Philosophy, Science.
Mayence, school of, 54, 55.
Mechanism, 39; *v.* Organism.
Melun, Vicomte de, 28.
Ménégoz, E., 168.
Mental healing, 119.
"Mental matrix," 149; *v.* Understanding.
Merian, 57.
Mezzofante, Cardinal, 92.
Microcosm and Macrocosm, 48, 129, 132, 220, 275.
Milhaud, G., 290, 292.
Mind, 146, 158, 159, 189, 190, 208, 222; *v.* Intellect, Thought, Reason.
Miracles, 94, 228-231.
Modernism, Catholic, ix, 55, 95, 142, 199, 256, 283, 284, 290, *296 ff.*, 312, 313.
Moehler, viii, 54, 72, 90, 94, 95, 263, 302.
Monads, 128.
Monism, 44, 49, 124.
Montaigne, 273.
Montalembert, 28.
Montesquieu, 9.
*Morale de l'évangile . . .* (*Mor. Ev. P, Mor. Ev. D.*), *82*, *99*, 144, 170, 180, 230, 243, 244, 246, 264, 265, 274, 275, 283, *303*, *304*.
Munich, school of, viii, 46, 49, 50, 55, 262, 263; *v.* Baader.
Mysticism, viii, ix, 14, 39, 41-43, 46, 69-71, 161, 176, 177, 180, 185, 219, 239, 240, 262, 288; *v.* Illuminism, Pragmatism, Knowledge.
Natural religion, 8, 18, 39.
Naturalism, 294.
Nature, 8, 48, 49, 51, 67, 70, 71, 75,

78, 104, 125, 127, 134, *135*, 148, 151, 154, 156, *214-223*, 227, 230, 272, 276; and spirit, *127 ff.*; God and, 78, 130, 248, 267, 272; idea of, *125 ff.*; laws of, 75, 215, 230, 235, 237; *v.* Spiritual law; logic of, 148, 156, 163; philosophy of, 82, *214-217*, 219; state of, 8, 15, 260.
Need, sense of, 195, *226 ff.*, 250.
Newman, viii, ix, 59, 99, 297.
Nietzsche, 104.
Notions, 159, 188, 226, 253; *v.* Ideas.
Noumena(1), 46, 48, 126, 221, 236, 237; *v.* Phenomena(1).
Novalis, 41, 43.
Objects, 126, 153; intelligible, 184, 200, 218; natural, 200.
Objectivism, 241.
Occasionalists, 128.
Occultism, 39, 42, 71, 230.
Oetinger, F. C., 42, 43, 50.
Ollé-Laprune, L., 289, 290, 294, 298, 309, 310.
Ontologism, 284, 287.
Organism and environment, 135; development of the, 54; *vs.* mechanism, 39, 45, 49, 51, 54, 104, 157, 162, 163, 213, 217, 230, 235, 236; *v.* Logic, Romanticism.
Organs, sensory, as distinguished from senses, 147, 178; *v.* Sensations, Senses, *Pressentiments*.
Origen; *v.* Alexandrian Fathers.
Overbeck, F., 40, 41.
Ozanam, 28, 33.
*Pacte de famille*, 87, 97, 98.
Pantheism, 33, 44, 46, 49-52, 144, 224, *241-246*, 247, 249, 250, 251, 253-255, 263, 265, 279, 286; and Scholasticism, 247 ff.; and Rationalism, 251 ff.; Romantic, 242, 263; Spinozistic, 254, 272; spiritualistic, 254.
Panpsychism, 110, 124.
Panvitalism, 102, 122-124, 248.
Parallelism, 124; *v.* Interactionism.
Pascal, viii, 6, 172, 222, 250, 273, 284.
Paulsen, 124.
Pellico, Sylvio, 282.
Perceptions, 148, 188, 276; supersensible, 178; *v. Pressentiments*.
Perrone, 93.
Pestalozzi, 139.
*Petit Séminaire*, 32, 86, 89, 90, 92, 251.
Phenomena(1), 144, 161, 173, 180, 221, 237, 242, 279; *v.* Noumena(1).
Philo, 71.
*Philosophie de Lyon*, 89, 251-255, 272, 273.
*Philosophie du Christianisme* (*Phil. Chr.*), *81*, 91, 92, 101, 130, 131, 160, 169, 184, 194, 196, 204-206, 208-212, 234, 236, *237-240*, 242-245, 247, 249-256, 263, 265-271, 274, 282, 304.
*Philosophie morale* (*Phil. Mor.*), *99*, 171-173, 181, 195, 196, 304.
Philosophy, 75, 213, *219*; and mathematics, 213-217; and science, 123, 125, 215-217, 292; and theology, 214-223, 271, 272; of history, 266; of nature, *v.* Nature; true and false, 265-274.
"Philosophy of Action," ix, 290-297, 312-314; *v.* Blondel, Le Roy, Pragmatism, etc.
Pietism, 42, 44.
Pius IX, 100.
Plasm, 106, 110, 111, 126, 127; and life, 128; and spirit, 106, 110; *v.* Base, Nature, Being.
Plato and Platonism, viii, ix, 62, 71, 74, 75, 114, 117, 127, 130, 155, 158, 161, 171, 176, 180, 186, 190, 216, 246, 256, 264, 268-270, 272-274, 276, 279-282, 284, 285, 298; neo-Platonism, 39, 71, 100, 131, 135, 279, 283, 284.
Plotinus, 69, 161, 279, 283.
Poincaré, 292.
Point, mathematical, 108, 122, 140, 165, 166; saline, 110, 122, 149; *v.* Center, *Foyer*.
Polarization, 51, 103, 110-112, 129, 140, 167, 221.
*Poser*, meaning of, 146.
Positivism, ix, 295; the new, 292.
Postulates, 143, 172, 228, 269; *v.* Axioms.
Potentiality, 106, 109, 111, 217, 218, 275; and actuality, 127, 128, 130, 142; or latency, 126.
*Praeambula fidei*, 209.
Pragmatism, ix, x, 142, 171, 172, 191, 199, 202, 203, 228, 290-294, 313, 314; and mysticism, 228; semi-, 190 ff., 288, 295.
*Pragmatisme*, meaning of, in French, 292-295.
Prayer, 68, 154, 210.
*Pressentiments*, 173, 179.
Prime Mover, 247; *v.* First Cause.
Principles, 77, 193, 222, 236, 237, 259, 272, 289; active and passive, 105, 106, 114, 115, 136; male and female,

106, 114; objective and subjective, 105-107, 109-111, 113.
Proclus, 279.
Progress, 8, 24, 25, 135, 204, 206; *v.* Evolution.
*Propositions générales sur la vie*, 82, *105-123*, 145.
Pseudo-Dionysius, 71.
*Psychologie Expérimentale* (*Psych. Exp.*), *99*, 102, 107-111, 125-129, 135-138, 140, 144, 146-160, 171, 172, 177, 178, 181-184, 200-203, 227, 236, 239, 265, 273, 275-281.
Psychology, genetic, of cognition, 145 ff., 156, 158; metaphysics and, 275, 281; of Kant, 144; of the Scholastics, 253; of the Scotch school, 236 ff.; pure and experimental, 135; transcendental, 178.
Pythagoras and Pythagoreanism, 114, 115, 216, 267-269, 279.
Quélen, Mgr., 33, 34.
Radiation, 107, 116, 141, 147, 149, 228; *v.* Center, Development.
Raess, André, 55, 89, 93, 254, 303.
*Rapport*, idea of, 21, 50, 70, 116, 125, 130, *135-138*.
Rationalism, 19, 31, 39, 41, 43-48, 54, 72, 84, 91, 96, 97, 180, 251-257, 262, 265 ff., 273, 277-279, 282, 284-288; and pantheism, 251-257; and Platonism, 273; and Traditionalism, 265 ff.; semi-, 286.
Ratisbonne, Th., 81, 83, 85, 91, 98, 139, 308.
Ravaisson, ix, 294.
Reaction, necessity of, 148, 151-153, 181; *v.* Stimulation.
Realism, 136, 238, 239; Scotch, viii, 21, 30, 32, 58, *236-238*, 257.
*Realpolitik*, 245.
Reason, 47, *60-62*, *134*, 146, *155-157*, 159, 160, *188-190*, 276-279, 286-288; and authority, 14, 24, 256, 271; and experience, 154, 156; and faith, 8, 18, 39, 44, 47, 50, 58, 59, 62, 63, 69, 72, 74, 79, 82, 91, *93*, *94*, *96*, *97*, 104, 143, 159, 165, *167-176*, 190, 229, 252, 259, 271; and intelligence, *159-167*, 189, 288; and language, 260; and revelation, *176 ff.*; critique of the, *142 ff.*, 253; discursive, 13-15, 69, 189, 288; laws of the, 227; metaphysical impotence of the, 9, 46, 65, 66, 72-74, *76*, 77, 93, 94, 100, *143*, *144*, 218, 225, 269, 274, 293; practical, 47, 144, 276; "things of," 259; *v.* Faith, Reasoning, Rationalism, Kant.
Reasoning, 19, 44, 76, 94, 144, 148, 155, 157, 160, 168, 188-190, 224, 229.
Recapitulation, principle of, 275.
Receptivity, 75, 105, 109, 168, 169, 190; *v.* Humility, Faith.
Redemption, 129, 131.
Reflection, 153-156, 160, 169, 173, 222, 223; *v.* Thought, Reasoning.
Régny, Abbé de, 33, 34, 56, 59, 64, 65, 67-69, 72, 80, 81, 83, 85, 91, 94-98, 101, 135, 176, 207, 208, *302*.
Reid, 57, 58.
Relativism, 31, 191, 198, 293, 295.
Religion of feeling, 39, 42.
Reminiscence, Platonic, 218.
Renaissance, 276.
Renouvier, ix, 295.
Revelation, 74, 93, 94, 170, *176-187*, 206; and tradition, 184; extraordinary, 178, 179; Mosaic, 229; primitive, 10, 16, 21, 24, 31, 185, 267; truth of the Christian, 224, 228-231.
*Revue Européenne* (*Rev. Eur.*), *31*, 35, 53, 54, 71, 72, 87, 88, 121, 130, 143, 186, 250, 259, 261, 262, 265, *306*.
*Revue politique et littéraire*, 289.
*Revue philosophique*, 290.
*Revue de métaphysique et de morale*, 291, 292, 296.
Riambourg, 84, 144, 249, 258.
Richter, Jean-Paul, 43.
Ritschl, Albrecht, 246, 256, 267.
Rochette, Paul, 232, 307.
Rohan, Cardinal de, 86, 89.
Romanticism, viii, ix, 24, 30, 33, 35, *38 ff.*, 47, 49, 54, 55, 71, 80, 81, 89, 91, 104, 127, 130, 139, 161, 177, 185, 199, 210, 211, 230, 231, 233, 235, 236, 239, 242, 246, 254, 263, 265, 276, 285; German Catholic, 284; logic of, 164; neo-, 284.
Rosmini, 287.
Rousseau, 3, 6, 8, 9, 11, 15, 24, 42, 43, 104, 139.
Royce, J., 132, 191, 204.
Royer-Collard, 21, 30, 58.
Rozaven, Father, 98, 99, 102.
Sabatier, Auguste, 95, 168.
Sailer, Father, 42.
Sailly, B. de, 290-294, 312, 313.
St. Anselm, vii, 161.
St. Augustine, viii, 99, 161, 186, 256, 265, 270.
St. Bernard, 161, 256.
St. Bonaventura, 256.
Saint-Laurent, 73.

Saint-Louis, Messieurs de, 86, 90, 92.
Saint-Martin, 14, 50, 263.
Saint-Pierre, Bernardin de, 24.
Saint-Simon, 30, 202, 231.
St. Theresa, 69.
St. Thomas, vii, viii, 100, 161, 218, 256, 264, 270, 298.
St. Vincent of Paul 296.
Sand, George, 30.
Sangnier, Marc, 29, 297.
Santayana, George, 12, 239.
Savoyard Vicar, 3; *v.* Rousseau.
Skepticism, 9, 18, 19, 31, 57, 66, 72, 73, 77, 110, 175, 233, 273, 278, 281, 293.
Schelling, 44, 47, 49, 50, 52-54, 57, 71, 72, 102, 135, 167, 177, 214, *239-241.*
Schiller, F. C. S., ix, 290, 291, 293.
Schlegel, Friedrich, 40, 43, 177.
Schleiermacher 36, 43, 44, 71, 142, 218, 241, 246.
Schmid, A., 36, 48, 301.
Scholasticism, vii, viii, 31, 32, 46, 47, 55, 66, 89, 95, 142, 232, 233, *247-257,* 270-272, 274, 285, 293; Bautain's definition of, 252; neo-, 142, 284, 285; pantheism and, 251-255.
Science, and theology, 220-222, 272; validity of natural, 13, 157, 166, 180, *213 ff.,* 230, 234, 237, 241, 271, 292, 293; *v.* Mathematics, Philosophy.
*Science vs. connaissance, 159,* 163, 217, 223, *235*; *v.* Gnosis.
Scott, Walter, 282.
Scotus Erigena, 71.
Scriptures, 67, 74, 205, 206, 210, 212, 224, 228-230, 270, 271.
Self, the, 152, 154, 169, 226, 227, 241; existence of, 57, 180; *v.* Ego.
Self-consciousness, 109, 118, 131, 133, 152-154, 178, 277; of the Absolute, 243.
Self-expression, 104; *v.* Individualism.
*Sens commun* (common sense or common consent), 20-22, 53, 57, 88, 186, 190, 196, 197, 202, 204, 225, 237, *257-259,* 291, 293; *v.* Lamennais.
Sensations, 30, 148, 190.
Senses, 74, 112, 120, 134, 145-148, 154, 160, 178, 188, 189, 218, 278; *v.* Organs.
Sensibility, 131, 133, 147, 205.
*Sensorium commune,* 146, 147; *v.* Understanding.
Sensualism, 29, 180, 234, 275.
Sentimentalists, 246.
Sex, 106, 110, 113-115, 120; *v.* Principles, male and female.
Socrates, 123, 267, 268, 270, 274.
Soul, 147 ff., 172, 180, 190, 210, 215, 227, 236, 253; relation to mind and body, 108, 116, 118, 119, 121, 124, 134, 145, 219, 248; *v.* Mind.
Space, 129-131, *132, 133,* 219, 254; *v.* Time.
Spencer, Herbert, 167.
Spener, 42.
Spinoza and Spinozism, 33, 39, 44, 45, 52, 254, 255, 272, 296.
Spirit, 48, 49, 106, 118, 121, *126-129,* 134, 156, 214, 216, 217, 222, 241; animal, 112, 127, 134; matter and, 128, 147, 242, 254, 277; nature and, 125; *v.* Life, Form.
Spiritism, 124.
Spiritualism, 29, 33, 241, 279.
Spiritual law, in the natural world, 70, 73, 90, 105, 129, *220-223,* 250; *v.* Nature, World.
Spontaneity, absolute, 60, 75, 78, 97, 138, 190, 278; limited or conditional, 75, 82, 100, 103, 113, 138, 222, 246; of the knowing subject, 238; *v.* Autonomy, Receptivity.
Staël, Mme. de, 30, 64.
Stahl, 108.
State, the, 244, 245.
Staudenmaier, 37, 54.
Stebbing, L. S., 293, 314.
Stewart, Dugald, 57, 58.
Stimulation, necessity of external, 105, 106, 111, 113, 119, 126, 138, 151, 187, 246, 278, 281; *v.* Fecundation, Spontaneity, Life.
Stirner, 104.
Stoicism, 134, 264, 277.
Strasbourg Philosophy, 79, 83, 289.
Strasbourg School, 79, 81, 82, 115, 214, 290, 296.
Subconscious, the, 178.
Sublimination, 120.
Subjectivity, 52.
Subjectivism, *239-241,* 277; and objectivism, 292.
Submission, 209, 222; *v.* Humility.
Substance, 126, 128, 129, 134, 144, 154, 213, 247, 253; *v.* Base, Nature, Plasm.
Supernatural *vs.* natural, 230, 231.
Supernaturalism, 50; relative, 50, 51, 231.
Swedenborg, 43.
Syllogism, 76, 79, 162, 188, 252, 253, 255, 269, 271; *v.* Logic, Reasoning.
Symbolism, 220, 242.
Systole and diastole, 117; *v.* Life, *Va-et-vient.*

*Tabula rasa*, 149, 187, 238, 261.
Taste, 78, 155, 170, 172, 183, 186, 192, 199, 202, 211, 212, 219; *v.* Feeling, Faith.
Tertullian, 168.
Testimony, 186, 187, 196-198, 205, 228, 229, 258; *v.* Authority.
Theism, 33, 50-52, 227, 263; *v.* Atheism, Pantheism, God.
Theology, 214 ff., 270; and philosophy, 214 ff.; and science, 220-222; experimental (sentimental, mystic), 218, 219; old and new, 231; rational, 218; *v.* Apologetics.
Theosophy, 42, 43, 71.
Thing-in-itself (*Ding an sich*), 44, 66, 125.
Thomism, 284; *v.* St. Thomas.
Thought, 152 ff., 160, 189, 267; discursive, 190; *v.* Mind, Reason.
Time, 129, 130, *131*, *132*, 133, 161, 219, 254, 275; *v.* Space.
Tracy, Destutt de, 29.
Tradition, 10, 14, 16, 24, 27, 102, 159, 162, 170, 185, 204, 205, 224, 252, 255, 261, 272, 274, 285; and revelation, 184; *v.* Traditionalism, Authority.
Traditionalism, viii, ix, 7 *ff.*, *16 ff.*, 25, 26, 29, 31, 35, 55, 75, 159, *176 ff.*, 233, 256, *257-262*, 265, *284-287*; and rationalism, 265 ff.
Transcendental Ego, 241, 277; ethics, 60-63, 103; faculty, 62, 66, 150, 161; philosophy, 247; psychology, 178; view of history, 244; world, 277; *v.* Noumena(1).
Transcendentalism, 161, 162, 185.
Treitschke, von, 245.
Trévern, Mgr. Lepappe de, Bishop of Strasbourg, 66, 85, 86, 90-92, 95, 96, 98, 144, 174, 175, 188, 190, 207, 229, 273; his *Avertissement*, 79, 90, 91, 93, 173, 224, 225, 229, 273, *307*.
Trinity, the, 30, 48, 115, 127, 129, 171, 220, 245, 248.
Truth, criterion of, 20, 53, 186, 191, *197-211*, 224, 295, 296; five kinds of, 192, 193; love of, 158; meaning of, 191-193, 292; need of, 193, 194; *v.* Certitude, Knowledge.
Tübingen, school of, viii, 46, 54, 55, 90, 262, 263.
Twice-divided line, 161, 268, 281.
Tyrrell, George, 99, 199, 296, 297.
Ubaghs, 97, 284, 285; *v.* Louvain.
Ultramontanism, 18, 26, 46, 55, 91.
Understanding, 44, 130, 146, 148-150, 189, 289; divine, 133; forms of the, 143; sphere of the, 149; *v. Sensorium commune*, *Verstand*.
*Univers Religieux*, 33, 57.
Utility, argument from, 6, 18, 202, 227, 295, 296.
Utilitarianism, ix, 271, 294.
*Va-et-vient*, 103, 107, 116, 117, 135-137, 146.
Valla, Father, 89.
*Variétés philosophiques*, 82, 139, 144, 172, 179, 180, 188, 189, 220, 273, 303.
Vermeil, E., 36, 46, 72, 263, 302.
*Vernunft*, 44, 47, 161; *v.* Reason.
*Verstand*, 47, 149, 161; *v.* Understanding.
Vienna, school of, 46, 48, 49, 55.
Vincent, 292.
Visions, 178, 179.
Vital principle, 145, 152, 164, 173; *v. Élan vital*.
Vital process, 111; *v.* Life.
Vitalism, 45, 151, 246, 285; neo-, 142; *v.* Panvitalism, Life.
Völker, Marcus, 44.
Voltaire, 3, 46, 53, 234.
Voluntarism, ix, 112, 136, 142, 159, 171, 199, 209, 236, 246, 284, 286, 288, 295, 297; *v.* Will, Pragmatism.
*Vorstellungsvermögen*, 149; *v.* Understanding.
Walther, Abbé, 60.
War, 25, 245.
Weill, G., 6, 301.
*Weltkreatur*, 49; *v.* World-Spirit.
Werner, K., 36, 46, 48, 53, 301, 302.
Wilbois, 291, 312.
Will, 120, 137, 145, 147, 153, 155, 158, 172, 183, 190, 195, 197, 205, 208, 210, 219, 236, 240, 279, 293; autonomy of, 60, 65, 103; dialectics of, 290; primacy of, 145, 159, 191, 290; to believe, 171, 208; *v.* Voluntarism, Faith, Soul, Reason.
Windischmann, 49.
Wisdom, 130, 133, 134, 140, 159, 279, 280, 281; and knowledge, 201; human and divine, 280.
Wiseman, Cardinal, 50.
Word, the, 106, 108, 115, 118, 121, 137, 182, *183-186*, 200, 206, 211, 212, 223, 262, 270, 280; human and divine, 281; *v.* Light, Wisdom.
Works, test of, 184, 201-203, 210-212, 262; *v.* Truth, Pragmatism.

World, the, 48, 126, *129 ff.*, 136, 220; celestial, 130, 227; divine, 180, 220; external, 131, 226; intelligible, 138, 159, 180, 181; material, 157; phenomenal, 133, 134, 189, 192, 277; spiritual, 157, 159; terrestrial, 130, 132, 227; transcendental, 277; visible and invisible, 221; *v.* Nature, Noumena(1).
World-Spirit, 129, 131-133.
*Zeitgeist*, 243.
Zeno, 246.
Zinzendorf, 42.

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